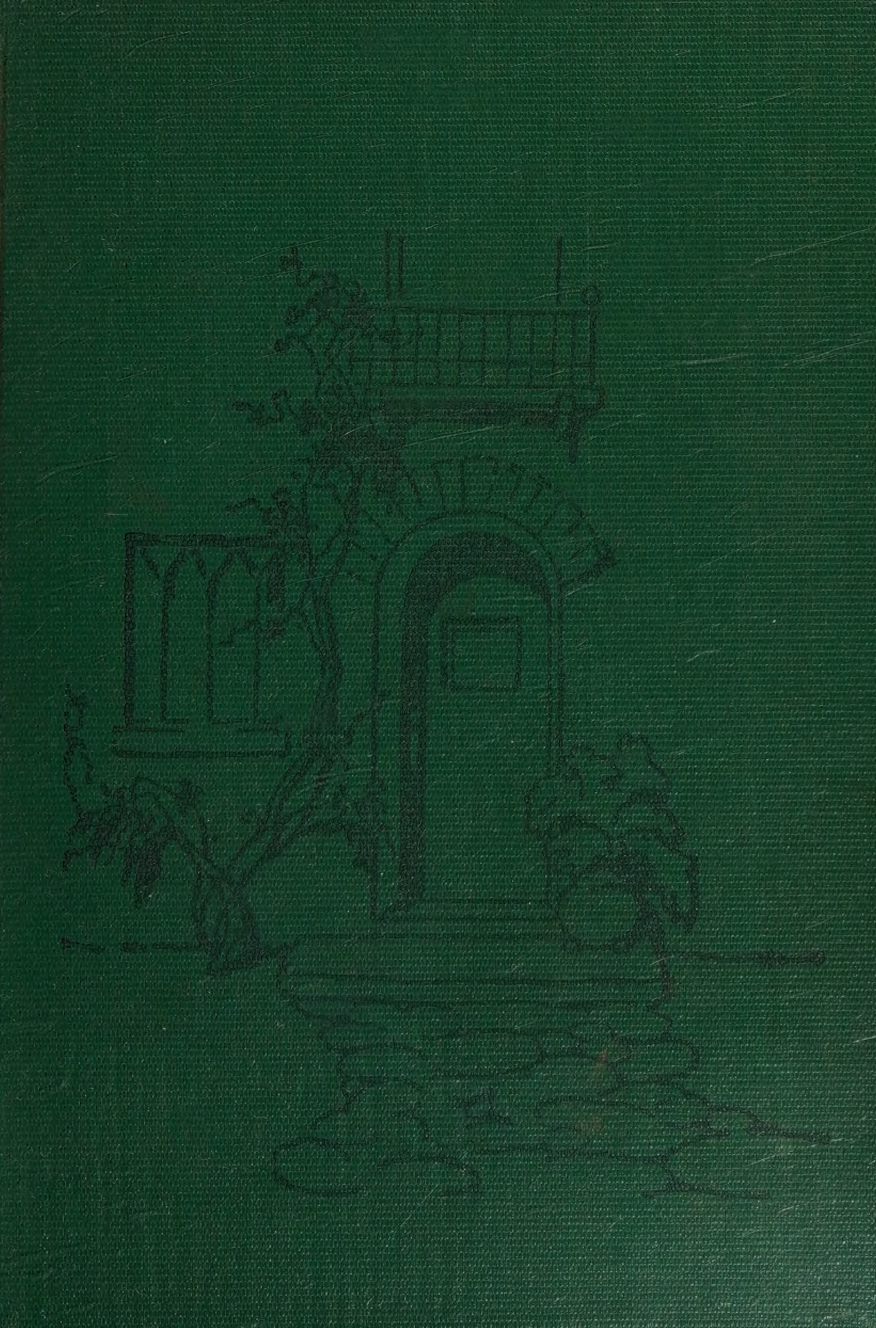

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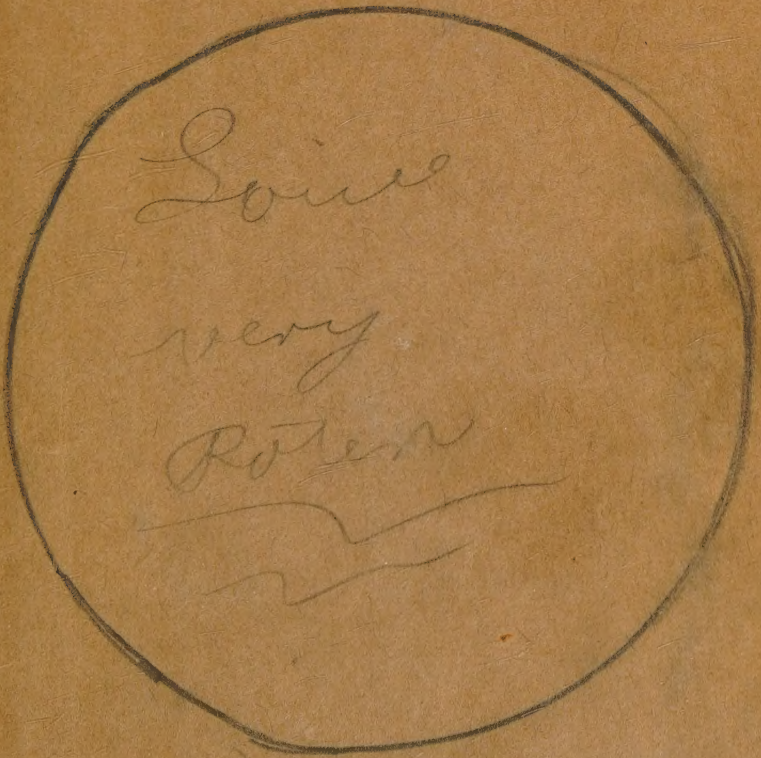

The Black Door

ALSO BY

VIRGIL MARKHAM

Death in the Dusk

1928

THE BLACK DOOR

THE MYSTERY OF THE FATE OF SIR ANTHONY VERYAN'S HEIRS IN KESTREL'S EYRIE CASTLE NEAR THE COAST OF WALES. ¶ NOW SET DOWN FROM INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY THE PRINCIPAL SURVIVING ACTORS AND WITNESSES

BY

VIRGIL MARKHAM

"The Moving Finger writes, and having writ—" OMAR

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June 3rd, 1927:
The Voice of the Press

FLAUNTING captions spanned every front page in the evening papers. One saw that even discounting the habitual hysterics of the gutter-press, the news from Kestrel's Eyrie was disastrous.

DOUBLE TRAGEDY ON RAMSEY ISLAND bawled one tabloid, with the sub-heading: *New Invasion of the Stronghold of the Veryans. AMAZING ATTACK REPEATED—TWO TO DIE* brayed another (which kept the word "AMAZING" set in type for use on all occasions), and continued: *Doom Descends on Battlements of Kestrel's Eyrie.* The third, which prided itself on its just sense of values, shared its front page among the Veryan story, a pogrom, and the report of an earthquake in which fifteen hundred were believed to be dead. It shyly announced: *DESTRUCTION OF HOUSE ADVANCES. Midnight Blood Orgy in Ancient Castle Halls,* and proceeded:

For the second time since the Veryan family took refuge against unknown foes in Kestrel's Eyrie, their ancestral castle on Ramsey Island near the coast of Pembrokeshire, the defences last night were penetrated and a ghastly tragedy has been the consequence.

Due to this invasion, which occurred between one and three o'clock, two members of the family may die. Sir Anthony Veryan's condition permits little or no hope of recovery, whereas the injuries of Mr. Lionel Crabtree, Sir Anthony's step-nephew, are very grave. No opinion can be expressed as yet in regard to his chances for life.

Discovery of the tragedy was made shortly before dawn by Miss Arthura Veryan and Mr. Hector Bransonby, members of the family. Miss Veryan, awakened in some manner not as

yet divulged, took alarm. Having roused Mr. Bransonby, a search was made through the rooms of the ground floor. In the hall known as the Refectory, among furniture disarranged and bloodstained, Mr. Lionel Crabtree was found unconscious, with blood still flowing from one of several wounds, apparently inflicted with a knife or dagger.

Searching further, Sir Anthony was discovered lying in a small antechamber between the Refectory and the hall of entry. It was apparent that he had been the first attacked, and that Mr. Crabtree had been struck down in going to his assistance. Sir Anthony was also suffering from knife wounds, and had sustained even greater loss of blood.

Miss Veryan immediately summoned the other inhabitants of the castle, all of whom are members of the family, for no servants have slept within the walls since 1923.

Medical aid was obtained by means of the submarine telephone which connects the castle with the mainland.

It appears that the weapon, again missing as it was when Mr. Standish Nicholson met his death at Kestrel's Eyrie under similar circumstances two years ago, was the same or of the same pattern as that earlier one. The nature of the wounds, it is asserted, makes it certain that it is a dagger of an obsolete sort, a narrow poniard with cutting edges conceivably of mediaeval Italian craftsmanship.

Of the other inmates of the castle, Mr. James Mottram, who, although a member of the family, acts as Sir Anthony's attendant, was ill in an adjoining chamber and heard nothing during the night.

The police arrived shortly before seven o'clock, and it is understood that the Chief Constable has already called upon Scotland Yard to undertake the investigation. If so, it is probable that Inspector Evan Frost, whose brilliant but unavailing conduct of the 1925 case will be remembered, is to be assigned to the present tragedy.

This crime, if it proves fatal to Sir Anthony Veryan, will be a particularly severe blow to those in archeological circles. It is well known that Sir Anthony has nearly completed his vast life work on 'The Evidences of the Romans in Pembrokeshire.' This monument of learning, announced for issuance in three parts of two volumes each, was resumed by him in 1914,

after his return from his last long sojourn abroad. Miss Veryan, who is his grandniece, has been his collaborator on the last part for several years.

A Summary of the Death of Mr. Standish Nicholson in 1925 will be found on Page 3.

This was the account that Tom Stapleton of Sunbeam City, Illinois, read in his hotel room in London. Only the night before, he had landed at Plymouth on his second visit to England, and this morning there had been Sir Anthony's letter of welcome awaiting him—that letter, written on paper stiff as parchment, with its coat of arms, and its delicate pencillings, clear as print, and with the glow of welcome radiating from its chiselled phrases.

Now, while the tabloid slipped from his knees to the floor, the American was suddenly dazed in a vortex of whirling guesses, hopes, fears, irrelevancies; but suddenly he drew himself up, stared in the full-length mirror of his wardrobe, a six-foot, lank-shinned, broad-chested, black-tousle-haired young man. His eyes, dark olive-green, tried to outstare themselves.

Was it too late now? Two years ago, rapt by vistas of civic administration, he had clung to the British Museum until it was too late. "Too late." Was that the word now?

He did not feel that he had decided, but that a decision had been made for him in the irrevocable domain of destiny. He must go to Kestrel's Eyrie. He must go at once.

He commenced striding around the room.

"They need me out there. By heck, *I'll* solve this mystery!"

Then his sense of proportion arrested him, but he glanced at his wrist watch. "Four-forty-five. If I get my ticket now—"

On the way to the American Express Company—rarely does an American dream of buying a railway ticket at Paddington—the ferment of excitement in him made anything but walking impossible. He could not have sat still in bus or taxi for a minute. Regardless of the rules of traffic, he went swinging

along in the streets thronged with home-goers, all of whom were intent on fresh news-rags proclaiming "VERYAN MYSTERY," "VERYAN HORROR," "VERYAN DOOM," in letters an inch or two inches high. Shaftsbury Avenue was lined with hawkers crying the Veryan tragedy; Haymarket was a thronged inferno wherein "VERYAN" resounded above even the rattle and clang of the buses.

His nerves slightly atingle, Tom stalked through this hubbub and into a linoleum-carpeted atrium lined on one side with cages, on the other with a long empty counter. It was near closing time, and the clerk he addressed was leaning listlessly there.

"I want to go to Kestrel's Eyrie. It's a castle down in Pembrokeshire. Ever heard of it?"

"Heard of it?" snorted the clerk, electrified into briskness. "Yes, sir; have you seen the paper this afternoon?"

"That's the place. Well, I want to get there in a hurry. How do I, and when?"

"Tomorrow, sir, on the South Wales Express. It leaves Paddington at one minute before noon, arrives Haverfordwest at ten minutes past six. You'll have to go from there to St. David's by bus, sixteen miles."

"That's mine, then. First class, if you don't mind." He thought to himself, "Fools, noblemen, and Americans. That entitles me to it."

Five minutes later he was on the pavement again strolling toward St. James's Park. Not once since he had left the hotel had he suspected that he was being followed.

The unobtrusive young man who loitered some ten feet behind him at that moment had a way of fitting into the surroundings everywhere so that he did not strike a sharp note of attention. At the entrance of the hotel he had been a tree-lover, enraptured by the foliage of Russell Square. Outside the door of the American Express just now he had been engrossed

in Low's cartoon on page three of the "Evening Banner."

Even earlier to-day—in fact, this morning when Tom arrived at Victoria—the futurist advertisements on the station wall had absorbed this chameleon-like person.

Now Tom drifted on through the glimmering park. He would ramble a bit before dropping in at the Trocadero for dinner. Ahead of him clouds climbed the western sky, darkening the sun and casting a shadow on the land. He could not take his eyes from the changing colours with an unrelenting gleam of crimson in the centre. He thought of the castle that lay beyond those clouds and beyond that crimson, islanded beyond that far peninsula, the Ultima Thule of Wales.

"It's like a sign," he reflected. Then he muttered, "Now, why the ding ding did that come into my head? I'm not one of these superstitious guys."

Of a sudden he remembered the girl in that distant place. Arthura! Heroic name! He could picture what she must be like! He fell into a reverie of masses of copper-golden hair crowning a tall and placid brow, of eyes with azure depths, of a voice that throbbed musically in the mezzo register. Then he pulled himself together.

He wandered deeper into the dark green silence where the Voice of the Press could not be heard.

The Impostor

THE panting bus continued on its journey. From Solva with the black lugger moored almost beside the highway it crawled back to the heights again to proceed along a road that darted into the hollows and sank deeper and deeper between the fields. A grey twilight had stolen into the valleys and upon Solva, which was secluded in the hollow of the hills. This tinge of shade, though it came early, would dwell for many hours before deepening into nightfall. But on the higher land it was evident that the sun still lingered in the western heaven and that sunset would not commence for some time.

Soon the American was aware of a clump of roofs not far ahead; a school existed for a second on the right, a building beside a robust round tower existed a moment on the left, and then he was in St. David's at last, rolling down the High Street, between houses for the most part of modern style, with a yellow or a pinkish cottage or so, and shops, and here and there a gap in the line. The declining sun, which shone straight up the road, touched with gold the High Cross in the Square and struck glints in many windows.

Since he had boarded the bus at Haverfordwest to traverse the "fifteen miles and sixteen hills" between there and St. David's, the thing Tom Stapleton had been biting on was that he had probably lost his chance of seeing Sir Anthony in this world.

This thought transcended everything else, the discovery of a new, quaint land, the hearing of a new, piquant mode of speech. Yes, Tom forgot even that strange experience of his today on the train, continued in this very bus until the out-at-elbows, maudlin man had alighted just now at Solva and had lunged away toward the sea. "Norshire! Born in Northumberland, by

damn!" Hadn't that been his tune? The once-flaunting suit now shorn of its bravery, the gaudy tie with speckles worn away, the Tyrian blotches in the fleshy masses of the cheeks, the bruised lip, the hard black eyes with glare compounded of insolence and apology, the husky and insistent voice—these might have been memorable another time.

Yet even this episode receded into the background of Tom's mind, when he dwelt on Sir Anthony. For five generations Tom's people in the Middle West had hugged the knowledge that they were the only collateral branch of an old-world family second to none in its breed of administrators, fashionables, men of letters, divines, earth-girdlers, soldiers, scholars, and simple English gentlemen. Tom himself had always felt that the Veryans were not actual tellurian beings, but some translunar strain. His own folk at home were immersed in the practical. But the Veryans were above all that. They actually lived in a castle. They did not work for their bread. They spent their hours in domains of thought and beauty. They were as remote from Sunbeam City, Illinois, as the gods of Mars.

From his toddling days, Tom had been a hero worshipper of old Sir Anthony. The American believed he had scoured every item of public knowledge about the head of the Veryan family from his roustabout, devil-may-care, constable-baiting youth, and his journeyings through the more improbable parts of earth, to his present danger in his castle beyond Pembrokeshire . . . And now that Tom had come to do homage to his hero, was it too late?

That morning in London the news of the victims had not been reassuring. Sir Anthony had been lingering on the verge of fatal collapse, stricken by loss of blood from a deep wound in the thigh and a severed artery in the arm. In the grim hours of morning after the attack, he had bled prodigiously, incredibly. Yet he breathed. Lionel Crabtree showed signs of possible recovery, and by a miracle might be expected to make a statement

during the day. His wounds, save one, were mainly superficial, but that one had entered beneath his left arm, pierced a lung, and grazed his heart.

Presently Tom was standing in the street, holding his hat securely with one hand and striving to control coat, bag, and portable typewriter with the other, for in spite of the month and the season, the wind skirmished merrily. His neighbours on the journey dispersed, the bus chugged off, and he was alone, singularly alone, he felt, although he realized that the "city" of St. David's was but a village and that it was supper time.

"Well, here's where I stay for the night; so I'd better get busy."

A small boy careered with great force from the next house, ran against him, and bounced off again.

"That'll be all right," Tom assured him. The runner, his brown face made several shades more obscure by seeming permanent accretions of dirt, shied from Tom's forgiveness and commenced to run away. "Wait a shake," cried the American, conscious that his voice sounded peculiarly alien in that place. "Just for that, now, tell me where people put up here. Or do they?"

This statement had to be simplified before it was understood. Then the lad was willing enough to postpone his errand in order to show Tom his way, and even to accompany him and carry his typewriter.

For a flash, between two closely-placed cottages, there was a glimpse down toward the Cathedral, with all its massive masonry of tower, transepts, and clustering chapels, with its lead roofs bright silver in the throes of the sun, its peaceful churchyard on the hillside, and the lofty ruins that rose to the north and to the south. Far beyond, across the meadowlands, glittered the sea that foamed against the western rocks.

"Great day!" Tom cried, and his leaning guide turned in surprise. "Go ahead, son; I was just seeing things."

In the street above, between a house comfortably labelled "Anchorage" and one with the rather disturbing name, "Cromlech," and opposite a large Methodist Chapel of bright pink, stood a hostel with several middle-sized dingy motors parked before it.

"'The Bishop's Palace Inn,' eh? I'll warrant it's a palace."

"Yes, sir. In there, sir," piped the small boy. Tom rewarded him. "Thank you, sir." Each time the "sir" had an elfin lift.

Tom had to stoop beneath the lintel to insure the security of his hat. The empty passage within was dim enough to be an antechamber to Hades, and he had to stand still a while to discern what the vague shapes about him were. He found that they were no more than a hat-rack, a grandfather clock with a face as dark as its frame, and a pair of high-backed chairs. So much he had learned, and was about to raise his voice, when he heard a laughing chorus from somewhere on his left, and a door opened from that quarter, revealing in the aperture a man of less than middle height but considerable girth. The grey bowler, the check huntsman's coat, and the puttees, made the American place him among the sodality of "horsey" men. His back was still turned on Tom, and evidently he waited for one last word with those inside.

"That's the full report, gentlemen," he said, and his slow, thick speech had a suggestion of the native tilt.

This was followed by a chorus of good-humoured protest, and when it had subsided, he added, "I said I'd look in a minute on my way home, and I have. My supper's been growing cold this half hour."

"A middle-aged-to-old-Welshman," Tom told himself. "I know that intonation."

"Oh, come now, doctor; that's not fair," complained a voice

within lightly and cheerily, but without the flitaway accent, an Englishman's voice.

"A vet," thought Tom.

"My supper—"

"The supper's ours," assured another English voice.

"My wife—"

A laugh arose, which precluded that plea from going further.

"There's no more to it," declared the stocky man. "I've given you the complete bulletin." He shrugged his shoulders and made a gesture of finality with hands outspread.

"But confound it, man," came a heavy boom, "we want to know what you think of it. Surprises you, doesn't it?"

The doctor paused in retreat to utter a sarcastic "Humph! Certainly not!"

"Ha!" cried the rumbling voice.

"And let me tell you, gentlemen," continued the other, returning to the door, "it will not surprise me to see the old man mend rapidly after tonight. A quart or so of blood—humph! He might have lost a gallon and pulled through all the same. I tell you, he has a whale of a constitution."

"And the other?" inquired a sardonic drawl, new to Tom's ears.

"You know as much as I do about him. I've told you his condition. It rests in the lap of the gods. Good night!" And the horsey man passed Tom with an inclination of his head and went out to the street, leaving a clamour of tongues behind.

Tom stepped into the room from which the voices were issuing. It was all a reddish chocolate tint, whose only relief was in the artless chromos on the walls and in the china jars, adorned with peacocks, which rested at the extremities of an ebon mantel. As if forgetful of summer, the grate showed an eye of flame, which was welcome, for in the wind was a hint of rain and chill.

Forming a careless semicircle about the fireplace lounged a

group numbering some six or eight, but containing such sharply varied types from coltish youth to crabbed age as one might have sought in vain among a hundred. A man with glasses perched on the end of a painfully thin nose along which his weak eyes seemed always peering, might have been a don. In fact, he had been one, and at that moment carried a text of the "Alcestis." Another was like a don of a different type, all beef and virility, but his ambition had been fulfilled no further than attaining bow in his college eight. The two who were stretched nearest the hearth might have been respectively the bearded Villain and the Juvenile of a forgotten melodrama, supposing the Villain not to be too heavy and the Juvenile never to have brushed his hair. Perhaps the Juvenile's curls had been tossed by the sea gales, for he was clad in a sort of rough boating costume, with white shoes and open V at the neck. Or he might have just come from tennis.

None of the group had the air of brusque inquisitiveness and ruthless but gay insistence associated in fiction with the kind of work which, as it happened, all of them performed—and not one of them was writing, or even carrying an officious note book displayed in a side pocket.

Tom's entrance into this galaxy went unobserved at first, and before he had a chance to open his mouth, the Villain opened his and spoke reflectively.

"So the old man may not snuff out after all."

The Juvenile emitted a silky laugh. "Not he, with that constitution! Ask Clegyrn."

"A whale of a constitution. He must know!"

"Yes, he's seen enough of it."

"*And* put it through its paces."

"He's no jelly-fish himself, the old doctor, not by a long chalk."

"Oh, no," agreed the tallest and thinnest and quickest among them, whose tone implied close knowledge of what he was talking about. "He's stood it pretty well. Never take him to be turned sixty, but he's that if he's a day."

"And he talks about his wife."

"Poor miserable woman she is," avouched the expert. "But he treats her well enough nowadays."

Tom coughed, not from politeness, but because the air was full of smoke, and stood there stricken by the concentrated gaze of more than a dozen eyes. In a trice the room which had been full of flying words became still. Then the fleshy would-be don exclaimed, and pointed at the black shell of Tom's typewriter.

"By gad, another of us!"

And the Villain, turning on his elbow, glanced at the American and his paraphernalia and welcomed him with a grunt.

"I don't know what you're trying to elect me, gent—"

"A Yank, by all that's wholly holy!" crowed the Juvenile. "Well, I've heard of American speed—"

"Speed and splutter," put in the booming one in an undertone. He was sitting in the darkest corner, and had been invisible till now.

"But this beats banigar," continued the Juvenile. "How *did* you get here?"

"He flew across!" announced the would-be don, and the real don murmured, "That's a scoop in itself."

"Gentlemen!" cried Tom, "Gentlemen, pardon me. I find I've fallen into a den of reporters—I should say, gentlemen of the press."

"Sir, we beg you to keep our secret," said the tall youth. "We rely on you. Until such time as my fortunes mend, I'm hiring myself out to the Half-west 'Courier and Tradesman,' which is why I permit these discourteous chumps to address me as Cootie."

"And you men?" Tom swept the rest with a glance. "You—say, if you're all reporters, tell me quick, what's the latest news of Sir Anthony Veryan? He was mighty close to the falling-off place according to the latest when I left London."

His spirit shrank from the shock it foreboded, while he heard

the clock-work utterance of the man with the drooping lids. "You were listening to the report."

"I was? When? Not—"

"That was Sir Anthony's medico who just left," explained the Juvenile. "You must have gathered—"

"That tubby little stable-master? And he was talking about Sir Anthony?" cried Tom, whose heart began to skip. There was so much relief in his voice that the company looked at him shrewdly again. "Sir Anthony he meant, who's so much better today?"

"Yes," said the Villain, "and that—?"

"Whoopee!" Then, a faint mist of suspicion rising in his mind: "You're sure, gentlemen? No spoof?"

"Spoof!" exclaimed the Juvenile with disdain. "You mention such a thing in the vicinage of the Press?"

"I only meant—well, the doctor didn't look—exactly—"

"Just so," assented the youth from Half-west. "Not very spruce. Old Trefor Clegyrn isn't one of your up-to-date lads still damp from the chemical bath, full of bounce and the newest notions for helping you to a speedy and painless death. But he can tell a live man from a corpse, and I shouldn't be surprised if Sir Anthony can thank him for his chances of pulling through. They were small enough yesterday."

"You mean he's not the doctor they called in when the attack was discovered?"

"Oh, dear, no. Old Trefor's living his declining years in Llanrian. That's six miles away on the north coast."

"Then who—?"

"There's a surgeon of sorts—Naval, Retired—has a cottage opposite Ramsey. Powell—Sir Anthony's man, also lives on the coast—fetched him first. They had the sawbones from here, too—not the regular man, who's away on holiday, but the locum. Young chap, he is; hard to tell him from a sixth form lad. And

later the police surgeon paid a call, rather looking for bodies, not men. But the first thing Sir Anthony did, when he came out of last night's collapse was to shoo 'em all away and send for old Trefor Clegyrn, and old Trefor's been at Kestrel's Eyrie all today."

"Well, that's great! He may live yet, gentlemen, he may live yet!"

"And what," said the Villain sharply, "makes you so insanely happy over the fact that an old man has a little while longer to live?"

Tom trod with caution. He cooled down.

"The interest everybody'd take who arrived on the scene of a murder and found it wasn't a murder after all—and sympathy, gentlemen, sympathy for the victim, who isn't a total loss yet. Can't you realize that we're not all like you cold-blooded newshounds, who don't care what they dish up as long as it makes a big splash in the pond? I'm human, I am."

"He's human, gentlemen," said the disembodied voice from the obscurity.

"I thought so, but who *is* he? Who are you?" challenged the Juvenile.

"He's Cleek, the Man of Forty Faces," answered the would-be don quickly.

"He's a long-lost Veryan, of course," choked someone with a smothered laugh. "You can always tell a Veryan by his chin."

The American's heart quivered a moment at the near guess of this jester, but he answered in very determined tones:

"I'm a man looking for a room in this hotel."

The bright laughter crackled, more mockingly than before.

"I'll let you have six feet of good floor space in my room," offered the Villain. "And that's beside six feet another man has bespoken."

"In this town," said one who had not yet uttered a word, a

clammy, droop-lidded man, with the diction of a precise machine—"I should say in this Cathedral 'city,' the vacant hotel room belongs to a vanished age."

"There's always Half-west," reminded the Juvenile.

"Half-what?" Tom exclaimed.

"Where you must have just come from."

"Oh yes, Haverfordwest. Quaint way of putting it."

"And I'd better be 'phoning there in a minute," said the tallest and thinnest, who had pulled out a small watch on an enormous chain. "My little one wants to go to bed in about an hour, and it can't sleep until it's heard what the doctor had to say."

"And when you've finished, Cootie, old atom," remarked the would-be don, "just put a call through to London for me, if you don't mind."

No one, however, stirred.

"There's not much chance, I suppose, of getting in at the castle?" ventured Tom.

The Villain complained in his beard: "When the castle is barricaded like a fortress, and a police sergeant warns you not to touch the island with your boat-hook if you go for a little ride on the sound, and one of the satellites of the same sergeant frowns at you if you lift a spy-glass to westward—"

"—as much chance of getting in there," commented the Juvenile, "as there is of looking through your letters and finding an invitation to lunch from the Imam of the Yemen."

"They've even deported the rabbits," said the voice from the corner.

"Why, then, the poor journalist must wait for the news to come his way."

Tom objected. "Well, in the States—"

"Oh, yes," commented the Juvenile, "in the States you'd charter an aeroplane and drop in or dig a tunnel under the sound and pop up all bright and rosy—and be kicked down-

stairs for your pains. They're long, high, hard stairs, too, over there, I'd have you know."

"All right; I acquit you gentlemen of sluggishness. But I'm not clear yet about this Clegyrn. Is he really the best man available?"

The lean Half-west reporter declared, "Sir Anthony had his wits about him. Clegyrn knew his constitution."

Uncertain in spirit, but with debonaire front, Tom said, "You'll have to pardon me, gentlemen. But what's the special connection between Sir Anthony's constitution and this seedy little Doctor Clegyrn?"

The room was still, as if the men were dubious who should respond. It was Half-west, the tall and meatless local authority, who finally answered.

"Well, you see, he's had so many opportunities, to, er, fix him up before—bring him round, you know."

"Bring him round—from what?" Tom was beginning to have formless fears of the next answer.

"Oh, from the booze, and everything that goes with it. Get him into shape again, after his nights out, and his weeks out."

"I must be silly," said Tom, "but I don't think I get—are you talking about Sir Anthony Veryan?"

Half-west's tone was rather grim. "You see, Sir Anthony is reckoned to have sown as pretty a field of wild oats as you'd hear about in a year's travel. That was nearly forty years ago. And the wildest feature of the business is that of all the young bloods of the countryside Trefor Clegyrn was the lad who played about with him. It was share and share alike. Why Sir Anthony chose Clegyrn, who was a poor greengrocer's son from Milford—I wish I knew, for nobody else does. But he did choose him, and together on Sir Anthony's horses they romped over Pembrokeshire, and there are some pretty stories about the fun they had together."

This was Veryan history without the glamour. For a moment Tom felt a shock of disgust, wanted to protest. But this instant's feeling was overwhelmed by a great wave of incredulity. Was he going to believe the first vile report that came along about the man he had almost worshipped since he had been old enough to understand who the Veryans were? Not he! *His* Sir Anthony was nothing like that.

The American's voice rang. "I guess they were just stories."

The whole room became vocal in opposition.

"As one example," declared Half-west, "there's a man in St. David's now who lived on the farm where the sheep drank the sheep-dip. You can see the farm without going outside the City."

The dark oracle pronounced, "The stories were so true that Sir Anthony never troubled to deny 'em!"

"Ah, but one mustn't be too hard on the old man's youth," remarked the don. "You understand," he went on, addressing the American, "Sir Anthony's father took him through Italy and Greece when he was quite a lad, to help him on with his Classics. The result was, if I may use the expression, a dualism. The boy *did* later become one of the great authorities in his field—"

"To put a period to my friend's recital," rumbled the Villain, "the dualism consisted in this: Sir Anthony learned not only the Classics, but no end of wonderful ways of having a good time."

"What these well-intentioned people mean," Half-west explained, shouldering in with a laugh, "is that Sir Anthony had two loves. He—"

Tom snorted. "You're all trying to put something over on me, gentlemen. Suppose you postpone the dirt. It won't make any difference to me."

Half-west chuckled. "Oh, I'm not referring to ladies specifically. The two loves were just—Rome and pleasure."

"But there were—specific ladies," said the man with the drooping lids. "There's a woman within a mile of here," he began, nudging toward Half-west as if he referred to him for

corroboration. "Our friend here—" His clicking utterance only half-veiled a smug nastiness.

His belief unshaken, nevertheless Tom felt stuffy at the prospect of listening to some scandalous and probably ribald account from those precise lips, a dirty story told by a calculating machine. "Excuse me," he said. "Don't pile up the evidence. It won't do a bit of good."

It is doubtful whether this protest would have halted the narration, but a bell clinking from somewhere within caused a profound stir among the assemblage. Those standing commenced to move toward the door, and those sitting or reclining rose to their feet and followed. Presently Tom was alone with Half-west.

"What does that mean—food?"

"It does. But I have to 'phone, and I'm afraid there's no room for you at this sitting."

"Food? Who wants food? Go and join the animals."

STILL the elongated Half-west made no move to depart for the telephone. "He's wondering whether I mightn't be a news item," thought Tom, and pat came Half-west's question: "Do I understand that you intend to stay here for a while?"

Tom's unfolding of himself, when it inevitably came, had the merit of truth—as far as it went. He was a tourist who had heard news of this tragedy in London the afternoon before, just a tourist who wandered with a roving commission from the municipal corporation at home to investigate certain problems of administration in the cities of Great Britain. It sounded rather big, with the words ending in "ation."

He did *not* mention his kinship with the Veryans. He did not mention the letter he had received from Sir Anthony only yesterday morning, a letter of greeting full of old-world courtesy without a hint of the approaching tragedy of blood. He did not mention his shock of the night before when he had read all the evening newspapers with their chorus of blood. He did not mention that two years ago, when he had been in London on a similar civic errand, his work had engrossed him to such an extent that he could not come away to see his hero.

"It's all so gosh darned strange," the American finished lamely. "I felt I'd boil over if I didn't mosey along here."

"What struck you as strange?" demanded Half-west eagerly. "Specially strange, that is?"

Now, there had been items in the morning's news that had startled Tom as greatly as the tragedy itself had stunned him the night before. Why was it that Hector Bransonby, who had been "roused" by Arthura Veryan, had been awake and fully

dressed when she knocked at his door? Tom knit his brows over that.

Then there was Robert Veryan, mentioned as "next after Crabtree" in relationship to Sir Anthony. He had been awakened shortly after ten o'clock by some noise he could not tell the nature of. But he had slept soundly thereafter. Why, thought Tom, should anyone named Crabtree be a closer relative to Sir Anthony than anyone named Veryan? And what time had he gone to bed, for crime's sake, to be awakened before eleven?

Queerer than any of these, thought Tom suddenly, was his own encounter today with the apparently half-crazed man in the South Wales Express, and the half-revealed, half-veiled allusions in the fellow's talk. But it wouldn't do to tell the reporter anything about that. It might have nothing to do with the case, and if it was connected, it was a morsel the police deserved first peck at.

Yes, Half-west agreed, there were strange crannies in this crime, more than in most. "Nothing stranger, though, than two years ago, when Standish Nicholson was killed. I knew Nicholson."

"I was in England then, too. Couldn't get away from London that month." (Tom had been a Reader in the British Museum, industrious in the archives of health administration.) He suddenly realized he had made a rash utterance, but Half-west appeared not to notice it.

Instead, the reporter pulled out of his inside pocket a folded, paper-covered book, apparently a scrap book. It was a foot long and an inch thick. Tom's eyes brightened.

"Say, is that the dope on the earlier case? Can I look at it?"

"I thought you might be interested. It's not mine, as matter of fact; one of the London chaps lent it to me. It may keep your mind off hunger until there's room for you at supper. Cheerio for a while. I have to 'phone."

What had fallen into Tom's hands was a syllabus and a sym-

posium describing the murder at Kestrel's Eyrie two years before. Tom remembered how the *Times* of April–May, 1925, was rife with the disaster. The space devoted to it, in those prosaic and unsensational columns staggered him. Now, in this little inn, so close to the scene of the unsolved crime, he turned to those clippings which had for three days occupied the left-hand column on the page opposite the leaders.

The outlines of that crime and this were remarkably alike beneath superficial differences. Hector Bransonby, awakened at midnight, had knocked at the doors of all the other inmates. Only Standish Nicholson, the youngest, a boy of seventeen, and, as it happened, the next heir to Sir Anthony, did not respond. Bransonby, Crabtree, and Miss Veryan had searched high and low, and finally discovered young Nicholson in a chamber at the southern end of the castle, a place known as the Servants' Hall, although it was practically disused, since no servants lived on the island.

Unconscious, bleeding from many stabs, on the verge of death, the victim died a few minutes later. From the position of the wounds, it was clear that after he had been struck down, his carotid artery pierced, he had been repeatedly stabbed in the back. It was evident that the weapon, which had not been found, had been of a very old design: a three-edged dagger.

While half the household sought for Standish Nicholson, half remained in the storey above. And it was well they did, or the tragedy of 1925 might, like this latest horror, have been a double one. While Sir Anthony lay in his room recuperating from a long siege of influenza, his attendant, James Mottram, kept vigil in the next room as a bodyguard. The door between Sir Anthony and the passage having long been locked and barred, the only approach to the old man's chamber lay through Mottram's room. Both the guarded and the guard had answered to Bransonby's alarm at midnight, and Mottram and Robert Veryan, who completed the roll of the family, might have

joined the search downstairs save for the danger of leaving Sir Anthony defenceless.

Then occurred a thing which had stirred his nerves when Tom had first read of it. Now again he succumbed to the reality of the unreal, felt the shudder that acknowledges that the common sense of things makes no sense at all. It was more than any mere conflict of evidence, common in a hundred murders; it had a touch of the uncanny, and moved Tom like a fragment of a tale of ghosts.

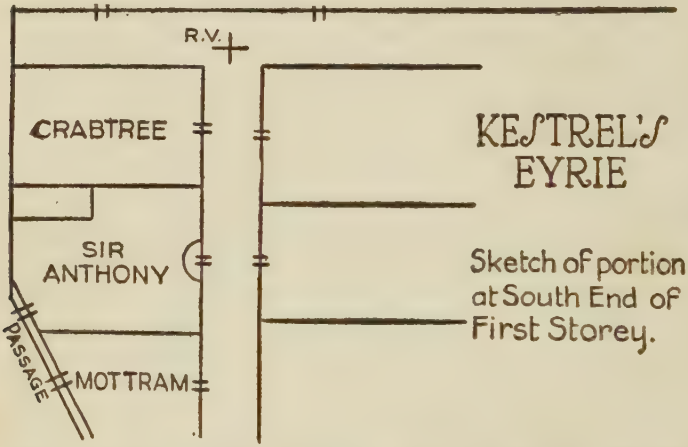
Ignorant as yet of the thing found downstairs, Mottram had remained in his room, and Sir Anthony in his. Robert Veryan patrolled the Long Corridor that ran north and south. A muffled cry from Sir Anthony had brought Mottram plunging into the sick room. He saw the old man in bed staring at the door with amazement and, almost, fear. Mottram's face turned automatically toward the door. He heard the soft movement of the mechanism of the lock, and saw the ineffectual turning of the knob. Someone, who did not know that this door had been unused, locked and bolted for years, must be trying to enter.

Unhesitatingly, silently, Mottram armed himself with the poker from the fireplace and sallied from his room into the passage. No one was outside Sir Anthony's door.

Moreover, no one had been seen there. For Robert Veryan, who had been assigned to watch the Long Corridor and the two small passages branching from it, lit only by candles in antique sconces—this Robert Veryan lay in a dead faint at the best possible point of vantage. The blood had left his head from sheer excitement; there was no other cause.

His story was that while pacing the Long Corridor a little way toward the front of the castle, he had heard behind him a brief, harsh sound unlike anything he could recall. Hastening back to the junction where he had a view of the passage outside Sir Anthony's room, he saw it empty. Then he knew no more. His protest, that he must have swooned only a moment or two

before Mottram's emergence from his room, went unheeded, the more because Mottram stubbornly declared that there had been no sound in the passage before the turning of the knob. Robert Veryan was a discredited person.



That episode of the tried door dominated Tom's thoughts. Supposing that Robert Veryan had lied or had honestly been mistaken as to the lapse of time before his falling down, then who could have tried that door? Bransonby? Or was Bransonby with those others downstairs? Why the name flashed through his mind Tom could not tell, but it was banished in a moment, for Bransonby knew all about that door. Well, then, granting that Robert Veryan—

Robert Veryan! More concessions than one to be made about him before you could conjure anybody into that passage where someone certainly had been. If Robert Veryan had not fainted earlier, and had lied, he was protecting someone. Who would that be? A woman, perhaps. That meant Arthura Veryan. Had *she* been in the presence of the others downstairs? But she would know all about the barred door, too. Jehoshaphat, this was complicated.

No, but suppose the other thing for a minute, if you could. Allow Robert Veryan's story to be true. Then you had absurdity, and the world was topsy-turvy, for the watcher declared that he had stood in the Long Corridor looking down the shorter one. Was his eyesight good? How wide was that passage? How was it lit? And was that door in the diagram directly opposite the locked door of Sir Anthony's sick room? Could an arm have reached out—?

Bah! You couldn't tell about these things until you had been on the spot. And guessing was worse than useless. Still, Tom went on guessing.

The most likely supposition was that Robert Veryan was mistaken about the time, and that he was insensible on the floor of the Long Corridor when the door was tried. What sort of person would have tried the door? A stranger, obviously, who had no knowledge that the direct entrance to Sir Anthony's chamber was impassable, but not enough of a stranger not to know that Sir Anthony was inside.

Or—jumping Jonah!—had the intruder gone down the hall trying *all* the knobs?

At this crux Tom, idling through other pages of the book Half-west had lent him, found that, in accordance with journalistic thoroughness, it contained episodes of many different Veryans living and dead—a kind of *dossier* of the entire family. These episodes were invariably romantic, and several of them Tom had run across in the magazine sections of Sunday newspapers at home.

One Veryan had lived all his life in a tower. One had married the greatest woman pianist and permitted her to play nothing composed since 1805. Yet another had been a hunter who with bare hands had grappled with a she-lion, and had slain her.

One venturous Veryan had become the leading adept of mesmerism in a generation when hypnotics were well known

to be the devil's handiwork. In keeping with this atmosphere of black magic, he had taken a first-class ticket from Windermere to London and had never been seen or heard of again. That had been in 1870. His son, maintaining the reputation of his branch of the family, performed brilliant but horrid experiments on ewes and lambs. He, too, suffered a deserved fate, for destitution forced him into the army, where eventually he disgraced himself and dropped out of the world's ken.

"It's a pretty boiling, isn't it?" Tom found Half-west looking over his shoulder.

The American drew a long breath. "I'll say it is. A couple of the wildest murders—"

"Oh, I don't mean murders alone. Besides the Nicholson affair and the onslaught night before last I can name you half a dozen things that have never been cleared up to *my* satisfaction." Half-west commenced ticking off on his fingers. "There was Dalroy Crabtree—did his horse actually kill him of its own accord? And what about Nicholson's dad, that they picked up under Beachey Head? Then there was this James Mottram's father, who was drowned off St. David's Head here; and Mottram himself—a pretty mess his face is after that attack near Salisbury. Then there was the stabbing in Liverpool, and not only that but the accident on the Salisbury Road that killed old Sir Anthony's nephew—'Whipper Snapper' Anthony they called him—and his wife. She was Grace Dymchurch, the great pianist, you know, and they were married after the Whipper Snapper was cut off by his father. They were found dead beside their upset pony cart, and there you are."

Excitement was thrilling its way through Tom's bones. "It's a wonder to me there's anyone left of the family."

"Just a few." Half-west ticked off on his fingers once more. "There's James Mottram, who guards Sir Anthony night and day. There's Robert Veryan, and Hector Bransonby, and

Lionel Crabtree (if he lives). And—" Half-west's tone seemed to imply a higher category altogether for the last item "—there's Miss Arthura Veryan, the Whipper Snapper's daughter."

There was! Tom had seen her picture in one of the papers, but it had been an unusually ambiguous smudge with eyes and hair. Arthura! That was a name for a girl to live up to! He imagined her tall and most divinely fair, with golden plaited locks, flashing blue eyes, commanding presence. She would have to be a heroine, to live in that place all these years.

The American jumped up from where he had been sitting in one of the tap-room stalls. "Thanks for letting me see this; it sure has set my mind working. I want some air, and I hope to find it out-of-doors." He reached for his coat. "I'll see the proprietor later. My things won't be in anybody's way, will they?"

Half-west was obviously flabbergasted, but managed a fairly natural "Quite all right. Only you'll miss your supper. Such supper!"

Tom grunted derisively. "Do I look as if I could eat now? No, siree, not food. I'm going to eat up a few miles and digest what you've told me." He strode toward the door. "Maybe I'll drop in at the island."

A loud hoot replied to this sally from the doorway where some of the reporters had gathered after their meal. Half-west and the would-be don followed Tom to the entrance beneath whose lintel he had to stoop. All three looked up and down the reddening street, still as empty as it had been an hour ago.

"For a City you'd think would be agog over this mystery," said Tom, "this place is darn quiet."

"It's agog right enough," answered the would-be don, who was picking his teeth. "You'll find a good many of the community out by the sound—" he gestured toward the west—"looking at the castle."

"Well I'm for there, to mingle with the throng. But I expect that when this good news about Sir Anthony gets around, they'll thin out a bit."

"They may not think it's good news," said Half-west.

"What!"

"I tell you there won't be much misery in the countryside when Sir Anthony pegs out. Young escapades have old shadows."

Tom endeavored to keep his tone bright in spite of this disquieting fact or belief that had bobbed up again. "Well, I'd better use the daylight that's left. What shall I tell 'em at the castle?"

The chorused mockery mounted again. The don murmured in a neat voice, "Assure Mr. Frost of our lasting gratitude," a sentiment the Villain capped bitterly with, "Ask him to drop in any time he's not engaged."

"Frost? Inspector Frost, eh? What's he done to you?" demanded Tom.

"He's just arrived," explained the droop-lidded man. "That's enough!"

"Ask Billikin," said Half-west, indicating the Juvenile. "He's our authority on police and other nuisances."

The Juvenile showed an eye of scorn. "I have spoken and I will speak. The generalissimo from Scotland Yard burned through St. David's in his red chariot at 6.41 by three sides of the Cathedral tower. He arrived at Porth 'Stinian at 7.3 or so near as makes no difference. Your servant jumped into his pram and followed, arriving there within a minute afterwards. When interviewed the generalissimo was as communicative as a wash-hand-stand and as affable as a fleet commander whose corns have been crushed by the boot of the supernumerary midship-mite. The generalissimo embarked for the island; I came home. Temperature both warm and chilly."

"That's not very fat."

"Frost treats a fellow like dirt, all but the walking over you."

"Always did," lamented the would-be don.

"Always will," forebode the Villain.

The don put in a defensive cluck. "But he has a keen, balanced brain, I tell you. In my opinion—"

"Oh, don't tell us he's a master-mind," groaned the Juvenile, as the American began to walk away, "or I shall perish."

The wind had not diminished in the street, and Tom had need to incline his head and press his arms against his sides to prevent his loose overcoat from flapping awkwardly. So going, he came to the ancient Celtic Cross raised on its seven steps in the City square.

Now, a man was standing there, looking at the cross against the sunset, a man in rusty black with clerical collar, but wearing no hat on his head. His body was bent like one of the sparse trees of that peninsula that yield to the prevailing wind and by long sufferance allow their shapes to be moulded by the air. His rather curly iron-grey hair, heaped in a hedge around his head, confirmed the impression.

He did not hear Tom's approach, but Tom paused beside him to ask the way to the western shore, and the man turned so that the American saw him face to face.

It was a small, wizened old face, with curves about the mouth that suggested a morose disposition or a life darkened with cares.

Instead of answering the question, the cleric asked, "Have you observed this cross?" He spoke very quietly, but his voice was deep and firm, not as old as the man.

"I can't say I have." Tom looked at it.

The long sunset of St. David's was entering its third phase. That is, it had bathed the earth in gold, then had plunged it in crimson, and now was remixing tinctures before spreading the purple pall which would deepen into night. The cross stood on the topmost of six steps converging toward a pedestal carved from the same rock as the cross itself. It was elevated sufficiently to be seen against the sky, which was visible through segments of the circle enclosing its arms. The purple stone was only a shade lighter than the changing clouds.

Tom knit his brows. "Well, I might have missed it altogether if the sky was a little murkier. It was an idea, to put up crosses in the market places before they found out honesty is the best policy. But is there anything unusual about this one?"

"It is the finest in England or Wales," answered the other, and he added, his voice as harsh as iron, "Something the Veryans cannot steal."

A sudden smacking blow could not have astounded Tom as much. He opened a wordless mouth and gazed at the cleric, who instantly seemed to repent his pregnant remark. The man's eyes were still fixed on the cross; they were cold and bitter now, blue as mist in winter, hard as pebbles that resist the sea.

The moments seemed interminable until Tom remembered to ask his way again.

"You are a newcomer, sir? For the western shore? It lies there, as you may see."

The cleric pointed where, beyond the meadows and the hills, the sun gleamed intensely white for a moment on the crawling waves.

"Thank you, sir."

"My way lies in that direction, and the farm roads are complex. If I may accompany you a little distance—" Hands clasped behind his back, bare head bent, the other moved off in the wind, and Tom could do nothing else but go with him.

"Poor devil," he thought to himself, "too proud or sad or poor or something." Aloud he asked, "You're connected with the Cathedral, aren't you, sir?"

"Oh, no," exclaimed the other, with a movement of the body only to be called a shudder. "Oh, no, no. I resigned my living here long ago." It was as if he said, "I resigned my life."

Tom could say nothing, and walked dumb, while the cleric's lips seemed to be repeating, "Long ago."

There was humility and sadness in the cleric's wrinkled face, in his stoop; there was hurt in his bleak eyes. Yet Tom believed that in the man beside him there had risen some immediate, special feeling that swept his surroundings out of mind. In the American himself the stress of emotion born of the last hour was great, so discomposing that he tried to lessen it by fixing his attention on the objects about him.

They had hardly begun their progress, but even now they were passing the outmost houses of the City and were in the hollow of a valley perhaps a third of a mile broad. There the wind was chastened to a breeze and hushed to a rustling murmur above their heads. The Cathedral was revealed beyond the graveyard in open view to the right, no farther away than Tom had thrown many a baseball. The building stretched its massive length in a

broadening bend of the vale which contained a stream that could be leaped across.

The cleric looked up at the great square tower in whose face a clock told a quarter to nine.

"When men built the Cathedral where St. David's church had stood, they raised the walls and the tower above the walls so that every man from the sea to the Monk's Dyke should have it in his eye and his memory. They added a new idea, vigilance. Why, from the roof it is possible to see even—" He checked his speech. "I ramble, sir. It is a fault."

Tom thought, "He was going to say you could see even the den of the Veryans. Now, what on earth has *he* got against Sir Anthony?" But the small, withered face was inscrutable, save for sadness.

A few strides farther on the road sloped slightly upward to an arched stone bridge across the stream. It was evident that the spot had once been strongly guarded by a gatehouse, of which, however, nothing remained on the north side of the road but a humble-jumble of grey stones overgrown with shrubs and almost bereft of the aspect of masonry.

"Pray excuse me one moment."

The cleric advanced to the half-glazed door of the building on the other side of the road, where the lower part of the tower had been converted and enlarged into a moderate-sized house of two stories, with a number of exceptionally broad windows, obscured by dark green blinds. Tom's companion now approached the entrance and turning the knob, tried the door vigorously before rejoining him.

"My abode," he explained in answer to the look in the American's face. "I have to take every care, for valuable things have been entrusted to me on my arrival here. The Museum is but three years old, and yet it contains much that—"

He lifted a hand to indicate the legend above the door, dark lettering painted on a dark sign:

THE MUSEUM OF THE SAINTS

"My appointment as curator here was an especial indulgence," said the cleric while they resumed their way. "I am never at ease when I am absent, for no one stays here but me. You must visit my treasures, sir, if you intend remaining long in St. David's."

"I will, I promise you. But—excuse my nerve—I had the notion you were a native here. Then what you said about the Museum—the ideas don't seem to jibe."

The curator turned his large, round eyes on Tom. "The Museum has been under my unworthy care only since I returned from London six months ago, to end my days."

"Oh, don't say that, sir."

"It is the truth. I was of St. David's once long ago, my friend, but for many years I dwelt and worked among the people in Whitechapel, London. Many, many years, enough to shake one's faith, if true faith were ever shaken." The speaker's voice was curdling to intensity. "There I saw all sorts of evil and misery, but never a man more wretched—"

Tom stared in wonder, and while he looked, the curator appeared to recollect himself, to withdraw a gesture half-made, which seemed to have been aimed toward the West.

"Yes, sir? You were going to say—?"

"A very foolish thing, no doubt."

They went now on a surfacing of pink-hued stones, this being the chief roadway among the knotted tangle at the edge of the valley, the others no more than country lanes leading each to its separate farm. While they met the wind again, a luxurious motor car purred past, the burly chauffeur waving complacent recognition to the cleric, who was too much immersed in himself to heed.

A tradesman's cart went by with a jingle of bells, scattering some ducklings that seemed to have lost themselves. Then at a

sudden turn of the high banks a small thatched cottage came in sight above the road on the left, a building of white-washed stone walls, partly overgrown with creepers. A three-pawed cat made efforts to wash its face outside the door. Tom watched the animal for a moment or two in sympathy and amusement. Sitting on its haunches, with no assisting support from the pawless leg, it massaged its cheeks, chin, and crown vigorously with its one fore-paw.

Tom knew that the cleric was watching, too, but realized quickly that his companion was not sharing his regard of the cat on the doorstep. Instead he had turned his gaze upward and through the leafy frame of the window.

The interior of the cottage was invisible, but a quivering of the darkness indicated the approach of a glow. The illumination brightened. Then for a fragment of a second Tom saw a face that swept all else away, a woman's face that passed the dark square in the light of a long candle with leaning flame.

He had only one flashing glimpse of a face young long ago, hair whose blazing yellow was streaked with grey, falling over a brow still smooth and clear. But the eyes seemed black hollows, and the mouth a harsh black line above the sharpened chin. There was in that transitory sight a suggestion of a skull, terrible yet beautiful, still wrapped in its own fair hair.

Tom heard the curator's indrawn breath, and his words, very low and broken: "Lit for him, for him. O God!"

Faint in the whistle of the wind came the sound of a distant bell, St. David's tower striking nine.

They had gone along some way and Tom's voice was constrained when at last he ventured to speak. "I can't imagine what you mean. But it wasn't meant—for me, I guess."

The other flung up an arm. "It is the common knowledge of the countryside; so why should not you know it? It is not cruel, malicious gossip, but sad, sad fact. I do not speak in anger, mind."

There was a gap in the wall where they had come, and the

man drew the American toward it. There they could look back across the fields to the cottage, half a mile away. The white western wall was pierced by a single window giving forth a yellow-blue radiance.

"One of the Flemish women of this countryside. For fifteen years," said the curator softly, slowly, "their lives were a scandal together here and in cities of England and France. And then, disappointed in another love, Sir Anthony went to the southern seas. But she remained here, where he had brought her at last. And when he returned, she lit a candle for him, but he did not come. Nor has he seen her once, they say, though the candle shines for him every night as it must have years ago, yes, before you were born, sir."

The bowed man's voice rose in a frail shrillness. "They denied it at the castle; the porter said he never came forth. But he was seen often enough stooping and doubling across these very fields in the night-time. It was he—he! I'll swear it!"

"You!"

The curator's speech rushed on. "I do not speak of these things to judge them. I do not judge her; I do not judge even him. But 'Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty—' Ah, well, you may say that texts are outmoded nowadays. Only remember, the judgment is coming to pass. Remember my words: when the way of these deaths is made clear, they will find that it is *hatred of Sir Anthony and his hateful works which is at the root!* Her light shows and is unanswered; his doom is sealed. The first time death did no more than rattle at his door. The second time death let him feel the keenness of its blade. The third time will be the end."

Spent by this outburst, which appeared to seize and take possession of him, the curator leaned on the gate and challenged Tom's gaze with flashing eyes. For the American had been gathering his faculties and now met the upturned glare with a look of equal boldness.

"Do you mean to say you know something about these murders? Something you haven't told anyone?"

The other shrank away. "No, no. Why do you say that?"

"It's natural, isn't it?" said Tom, doggedly, wading deeper into the waters. "If you did know, now, would you tell?"

"Who? Whom would I tell?" cried the curator, winding himself more and more into a shabby ball from which his eyes peered out afraid.

"The police, of course. Do you know there's going to be a third attack? If you do, how do you know it? When will it be? This Inspector Frost that's just arrived would like to hear what you have to say."

Fear crouched in the other's posture, and breathed in his hasty words. "No, no, I tell you. No one has questioned me about this before."

"Well, I thought you might know something," said Tom somewhat lamely, for he had lost much of his fire-breathing spirit, and was feeling aghast at his temerity. "I'll admit I was excited."

"I know nothing, nothing," cried his companion. "I spoke in haste. I know nothing that no one else knows. Pray believe me."

"Don't be so much upset, sir, please," begged Tom. "You just got excited, too, I suppose."

"Indeed it is so," said the little man hastily. "You must not receive my words too literally." He moved a vague hand across his forehead. "This late horror has burdened my mind—I—I hardly—"

Tom strove for a conciliatory phrase.

"You must excuse me, sir," the curator said. He still panted faintly, and his eyes were not at ease. "I passed the road I intended at the last crossing. I must turn back. You will have no difficulty now in finding your way to the shore."

"Good evening, sir," Tom responded dully. "I hope—"

But the curator had departed, stamping and stumbling, swing-

ing from side to side of the road, his hands clasped behind his back.

"Queer crab, he is. Might be an exhibit in his own museum." Tom shook his head sadly. "Pent-up little chap. Wanted to unbosom himself, all right."

The American rubbed his chin, and looked long at the yellow flame which had been a beacon, unanswered, for Sir Anthony so many years. In the accession of night, the gleam was brighter. "How excited he got over that candle. Worked himself up. I wonder if there's anything in it. She waits and waits for Sir Anthony, and Sir Anthony waits for the big smash."

At this distance the yellow flame twinkled. Somehow Tom found it difficult to take his eyes away from it.

"Something fine, something beautiful in all this—muck, they tried to make it," he mused. "A thing that could last as long as that—"

He squeezed himself out of reach and indeed out of sight into a recess of the stones to let the same magnificent motor pass again, going toward the shore.

"I wonder if there's anything in that little prelate's story," he reflected, following in the wake of the exhaust. "The way he raved, you might think—"

He realized later that the curator had told him the fundamental fact.

TOM would have resumed his march at once but a thing caught his eye in the middle distance beneath the three hills that commanded that region to the north. Figures were stirring there, assuming stiff attitudes, and making odd movements with their arms. On those windy dunes, now called The Burrows, had stood Menevia, the last outpost of Rome. The American isolated a single figure against the crimson-purple sky, a silhouette like a burnt and twisted matchstick. It seemed to contort itself to the utmost with arms flung up, and then—

"Golf, by jiminy! Some people have the crust to play golf in sight of Ramsey Island!"

While he watched another matchstick wind itself in the twilight: "Golf links right down to the jumping-off place at the edge of the water. Hello, hello! He didn't drive that time. What's he doing?"

As far as Tom could make out, the player had relaxed his twist and was staring to westward.

"Must be something doing on the island," Tom told himself. "I can't be far from the breakers now. Giddap, horsey!"

He pressed on over the shoulder of the crag ahead, in whose shelter stood a cottage with one of those gigantic round chimneys that had outlasted dynasties; and he found the wind waiting for him on the other side. Only a field or two lay between him and the broken coastline. Across the water, he saw Kestrel's Eyrie standing on the edge of its precipice. He could distinguish its general outline and squat bulk clearly, though the last rays of the heroic sun had lifted from its black-grey walls.

Now he had reached the limit of the mainland and stood on the brink, with the deep and everlasting music of the sea in his

ears. He saw the waves roaring along the rocks far down the coast, sometimes climbing fifteen or twenty feet and raising lean white arms of spray before falling back. Close on one hand he discovered the ruin of an ancient chapel with fallen roof, the building waist-high in grass. A garage stood near with yawning doors. A little distance the other way a flight of stairs descended to the entrance of a lifeboat station of yellow-painted iron which was carried aloft on high pillars with runway tilted toward the depths.

On the rocks, on the steps, and in the grounds of a small cottage beyond the chapel, men and women, and even a number of tawny children, were standing. Their bikes, motorcycles, carts and other means of conveyance were strewn everywhere. The magnificent motor rested apart, and its chauffeur lolled in his seat reading a paper-covered book.

Among all these was one face, very youthful but truculent and haggard, looking anxiously toward the castle.

Then for the second time that day Tom heard the English language spoken by the Welsh. As before, while travelling in the bus from Haverfordwest he felt abruptly swept to a new land whose remoteness was told not in the miles, a region impossible to the Tom Stapleton of yesterday in London. The feathery speech, the delightful quirk at the end of each sentence as if it were tipped with mercury, at first amused and then fascinated him.

Soon the American noticed fingers extended toward the dark and restless expanse of the sound, and following the gestures he discovered that a motor launch, which must have put off from the island, was pursuing its course northward along the coast of the mainland and seemed to be making for the little harbour where the lifeboat station stood.

With an access of emotion which was neither fear nor curiosity, but nearer admiration or even awe, Tom watched the progress of the craft. It was rather small and dingy. But it had

come from the castle! That was enough to lend it magic. With growing excitement he saw it turn away from the bickering waves and bob its way gently toward the station. A minute later a very tall, strongly-built man in a reefer jacket and yachting cap leaped on the lifeboat runway.

The big man climbed to the boathouse at a quick pace, and, hastening round it by the rail-guarded passage, continued to the flight up the cliff. Along the fifty-foot stairs he came in leaps of three steps at a time. The little clusters of labourers with corded knees and farmhouse-wives in caps and shawls made way for him respectfully; but few saluted him, nor did he answer any salute. Reaching the top of the flight, he advanced straight to the chauffeur of the de luxe car, who had alighted at his approach.

The pair exchanged only a few words; then the man from the launch turned away and looked among the people, searching for someone.

He caught sight of Tom and walked straight up to him. The American was aware of shoulders as tall as his own and twice as husky, of a large, light, open face with a good-humoured expression both above and below the dabs of yellow moustache. The stranger's first words struck him almost a felling blow.

"Are you Mr. Stapleton?"

Tom really forgot for a moment whether he was or not.

"I—yes—but—"

"Then you're the man I'm looking for."

"Me? What's that you said?"

Big, blonde, robust, and cheery, firm-standing as a monolith, the other, a man in his mid-thirties, regarded Tom with the benevolence of a bear. "I'm Hector Bransonby, and I've come to fetch you to the castle."

Tom felt his hand grasped in a masterful paw. "But—why—how—"

"That's what you came for, I believe?" Bransonby said, smiling. "And here I am to ferry you over."

"But—my bag—"

"Your luggage is ready," assured the other, who seemed determined to prevent Tom from recovering from shock. "Powell here, our major-domo, has called at the hotel and picked up your things. He'd have brought you, too, but they told him you were heading in this direction."

"Great day! And so you—you really want—"

Bransonby chuckled. "You'll survive it, man. Come along, and I'll explain on our way. You'll come?"

"Sure I will," Tom assented weakly. Less than semi-conscious of his acts, he went clattering down the stairs after Bransonby, following him around the lifeboat station and down the runway to the nodding launch. Powell came after with Tom's luggage.

A man who had remained aboard executed some deft manoeuvres with a boat hook. When the two had jumped into the boat, and Powell had handed Tom his belongings, the launchman started the engine, and the craft turned its nose toward the rolling waters of the sound with a chug of mortal defiance, Bransonby at the tiller.

And this was the incredible end of his ten-hour odyssey! Tom drew his coat about his neck and huddled away from the clots of spray, his heart beating high at the challenge of adventure and the call of romance. Dark waves, beetling cliffs, lonely castle, lustrous heroine! "Whew!"

On the surface of the water the wind was a little less boisterous, and he was able to call into Bransonby's ear and hear part of what Bransonby answered.

His first question was about Sir Anthony. When he spoke he quivered to a throb of sudden, irrational anxiety. What if the old doctor had been talking through his hat? What if the re-

porters had been playing a brutal joke on him? But Bransonby's shout came back reassuring over his Atlantean shoulder.

"Much better . . . how we came to look you up. We wired your hotel in London, and they . . . you had left St. David's as a forwarding . . . letters." The wind intervened. " . . . 'phoned Powell to fetch you . . . that lot . . . you'd left your name . . . fetched luggage, anyhow."

"So that was it." Tom realized that although he had been swamped by astonishment, it was simple after all.

Bransonby's words flashed by. "Sir Anthony . . . glad you've come. He doesn't know. Do him a world . . . shouldn't be surprised."

"Mr. Crabtree?"

"We still . . . hopes . . . conscious . . . statement."

"Statement? About the crime?" jerked Tom, losing his balance and swaying against Bransonby's broad back, which felt as solid and immovable as a bank of earth. "What did he say?"

Bransonby had steered the launch straight westward, so that they came as quickly as possible under the lee of the island. By so doing he had avoided a great table of rock that bulged above the water in a direct line between the port and the castle. The helmsman turned the course south, parallel with the cliffs. Both wind and wave were subdued in the shadow of the island, and he was able to devote more attention to speaking.

"Fairly full statement. Lionel's awfully far gone, poor fellow. Coma supervened on collapse. As bad as Sir Anthony, in a way."

"What did he say?"

"Well, it's clear enough, most of it. It happened in the dark—"

"Why not?"

"Well, in summer there's no pitch darkness here until after eleven. And there are traces of dawn at three or thereabouts. So

whoever the devil is who's broken in, he's had to pick his hour. He has done, too."

"Was it the same the—two years ago?"

"It was. Poor young Nick. Well, Lionel says that he had called Anthony for some reason—we can't understand what had alarmed him. I fancy some suspicious sounds from the floor below. It must have been about one o'clock."

"Just a sec, if you don't mind. I seem to remember that to reach Sir Anthony's room—"

"You have to go through Mottram's, all right. Yes, Lionel went past James, who was sleeping the sleep of the just, in order to reach Sir Anthony."

"Yes, but gee whiz, don't you lock your doors? How could he get in without waking the man up?"

"Some of these old locks are duplicates, and we can open each other's doors. We generally remove the keys after we've locked up. I have a master key for everything."

"I see it now. And what happened then?"

"Instead of routing the rest of us they decided to investigate together; or rather Lionel insisted on going down and dragged Sir Anthony along, too. Oh, I only mean that Lionel's headstrong as the deuce, and what was Sir Anthony to do?"

A bird with scarlet beak and plumage a medley of soot and snow screamed past. Tom, looking astern, thought he saw a head lift itself from the water, though both water and head were dark.

Bransonby turned at the touch on his arm. "Eh? That? A seal. Yes, we have 'em here."

"Sorry I interrupted." Again Tom saw the smug, flat head lift for a moment and leisurely withdraw beneath the wave, and Bransonby resumed his story:

"Right at the outset there's a jolly queer mix-up in Lionel's account—brain wobbly, I imagine. He commenced to talk about some man he and Sir Anthony saw on the balcony as soon as

they started, and said that they let him get away without raising an alarm. Imagine that, Stapleton! But Lionel seemed to get muddled, said Sir Anthony could clear it all up; *he* wasn't going to. I think myself that right there Lionel was *non compos.* He sounded mighty muzzy, poor chap."

"I don't blame him."

"Well, the affair really begins with their search down below. They didn't find anything suspicious and were coming back to the stairs through the Refectory—our dining room—and the Hall of Curtains (that's the name of the largest room on the ground floor). Perhaps I'd better explain that it's a tall room, extends into the first storey. It's lined with arras, as they used to call them, all around, reaching to the ceiling and covering the doors, too. They were about to enter there, Sir Anthony in the lead with his light in his hand—a torch, I mean; we have no electricity laid on—when something jumped out from the curtain beside the door."

Bransonby's pause seemed like an act of spite. He had broken off, however, only to look intently at a portion of the cliffs, and continued:

"Or rather something struck at Sir Anthony from behind the arras as he passed into the room, and when he was down and his light was smashed out, the murderer leaped on him. There were chairs beside that door, and in the general tussle they got knocked down and there was a merry how-d'ye-do."

"But didn't Crabtree—?" asked Tom, before whom the unpleasing vision arose of an old man struggling for his life while a younger man hesitated to leap in.

"I should say he did. He's no coward. He had no glim, though, except a candle. That was extinguished in a wink; he was close behind Sir Anthony, you see, and the impact of the attack knocked Sir Anthony and him together. But Lionel says he plunged into the mêlée. He told us a rather grisly thing, too."

Tom leaned forward.

"He said that the one thing he remembers distinctly is smelling blood just before he went to Sir Anthony's rescue. After that—"

Tom had to wait through another second or so, his soul biting its knuckles.

"Well, he saw red, and nothing else, of course. In fact, he remembers scarcely anything afterward, except the lust of battle. The fight must have continued across the floor into the antechamber—that's the cloakroom—and back again. The hat-stand was tipped over, and the window badly smashed. But Lionel seemed to be trying to extricate Sir Anthony one moment and tossing in bed the next."

"But he'll live, won't he?"

"I expect so. Depends on his heart. It was always in the right place, anyhow, but a bit crocky at times. He went through three years of the war, including the Dardanelles, and that didn't leave him fitter than before."

"Pity he had to make that long statement. Who made him? Was it this man Frost I've heard about?"

"Oh, yes. But the police have to do their bit, and the doctor said Lionel was up to it, and might not be later on if he had a bit of bad luck."

"Has Sir Anthony been able to add anything to Mr. Crabtree's statement?"

"Too weak altogether. He only seemed to come to thoroughly for a little while, asked about two or three things, including you, then dozed more or less. But he's better, no doubt of it."

Tom hesitated, then plunged. "You—found him, didn't you?"

"I did," assented Bransonby, and gave a slight shiver at the recollection. "In the Refectory entrance. He'd bled terribly, Stapleton. He was drenched in his blood; we had to walk in it."

"My God! But I thought you found him in the antechamber. That's how I read of it in the papers. And Mr. Crabtree was lying in the Refectory."

"The papers were wrong. Unfathomable asses, reporters can be. I had something to do with them once, officially. I've given up reading the papers about the Veryan mystery," confided Bransonby with a short laugh. "Encyclopedias of misinformation, the papers."

"Well, what, for instance—?"

"Oh, plenty of things. Where we found Sir Anthony and Lionel is a point that's to the point. Why, I told the whole crew of 'em there at Porth 'Stinian myself—Sir Anthony had bled like a stuck pig—no exaggeration—and finally dropped unconscious just in the doorway between the Hall of Curtains and the Refectory. It was Lionel that was in the antechamber. He hadn't bled a third as much. . . . Then in another silly sheet I read that Arthura had heard a sound and had come to wake me."

"Well, didn't she?"

"Gad, no. I was the first to wake, and *I* called *her.*"

"Why her?"

"Surprises you? I did it because I thought she was fitter than the rest of the men for the job, and that's that."

"Oh, I see." The Amazon, Tom reflected. Her portrait was definite.

"That reminds me of another clinker," said Bransonby after an interval. "Somewhere I read that Robert was awakened about eleven by some sound he didn't recognize. Well, Robert usually turns in early, and he did that night, but I don't think for a minute that he told anybody that he knew what time he was roused, and if he did say so, I'd challenge him. He didn't get out of his bed to look at his watch. Probably whatever woke me woke him and he decided to ignore it. I fancy it was two in the morning, not much earlier."

"By the way, Mr. Bransonby, I've been wondering what did wake you up in the night."

Bransonby shrugged elephantine shoulders. "Wish I knew. I'm a sound sleeper usually, but I just awoke. Arthura hadn't—I inquired of her pretty keenly because the other time she had —well, an odd experience."

"The other time? Two years ago?"

"That's right. When Nicholson was attacked, she says she had a dream of tearing cloth."

"Tearing cloth!"

"Yes. Try as she would, she couldn't remember the details of the dream, but she had the fixed impression that it was something about a sheet of muslin being ripped from hem to hem. She didn't wake up then, however, or at least she thought not—and later, when she did, she wasn't alarmed at first. She waited to see if Uncle Robert—Robert Veryan, that is—had heard—"

"There now," cried Tom. "There's a big mystery to me, too. I've been wondering since I saw the papers this morning. Why is Mr. Robert Veryan more distant from Sir Anthony than Mr. Crabtree?"

"Oh, lord," laughed Bransonby, "don't quiz me about our devious family tree (Robert's specialty, by the way). I can give you this hint, though. There's a rigmarole you have to learn before you understand our complexities: 'Anthony, Vernon, Roger, and Sally.' Just remember them and you're safe."

"Anthony, Vernon, Roger, and Sally. Well?"

"Sir Anthony was the first true-begotten child of his father. Vernon next: Arthura's his granddaughter. Roger next: no descendants as far as we know. Last Sally: Standish Nicholson was her grandson."

"And Robert Veryan? How about him?"

"Nowhere in the immediate family, you see. Like me, he's an outsider. His name really wasn't Veryan at all."

"How come? What *is* his name?"

"Gribble. He made it Veryan when he came here. Sir Anthony rather expects him to take over when there's to be a new head of the family. Sir Anthony doesn't want the name to die."

"But Veryan's not his heir?"

"No, indeed, not at present, anyhow. Robert doesn't need cash, you know. He's a rich blighter, the only one of us with a really large independent income."

"Not as rich as Sir Anthony?"

"Well, hardly. But the Gribbles made half a million in marmalade. Robert hates the stuff."

In the silence that followed the American recalled again his experience of that afternoon. Was it right to tell Bransonby about the drink-crazed, half-raving fellow who had invaded his first-class compartment on the train, burst into vague prophesies about the Veryan mystery, taken the bus at Haverfordwest, and departed along the quay at Solva?

But they were almost at their crossing's end. Hardly time to commence the story now. Already they heard the water lapping softly against the base of the cliffs which looked vast and insurmountable above the small craft. They were close enough, in fact, to see the composition of the rock, and Tom observed that all along the shore it was actually as black as coal and had something of the cleavage of coal, smooth facets with irregular sharp edges.

"Look there," Bransonby pointed.

"That smash-up? Looks as if a young earthquake had been playing around."

"Blown up with dynamite."

"Great Golly! You don't mean in an attack?"

Bransonby smiled, perhaps a little ruefully. "No; it was a defensive move. Some rocks there near the water-level used to form a natural landing-place. A little while before poor Nick

was killed two years ago, Sir Anthony had the landing-place destroyed. My suggestion it was. But it did Nick no good, poor lad."

"But there must be some spot—"

"There's only one way of access to the island for man or beast that comes by water," said Bransonby decisively. "That's the way you're coming. I know it sounds a bit die-hardish and bitter-endish, but it's a simple fact, as you can see for yourself tomorrow, that everywhere else the cliff surface is perpendicular or overhanging, never less than sixty feet high, and sometimes it climbs to four hundred. So how do you suppose anyone could get in?"

A hundred yards or so beyond the boathouse a series of low but formidable-looking rocks extended from the island straight out into the sound a quarter of a mile. Whereas along the foot of the cliffs the water swished and gurgled, the waves that leaped against these rocks broke into muttered thunder and dashed their white caps high into the air.

"Hear 'em barking?" asked Bransonby, with a jerk of his head.

"I do. What do you call them?"

"The Bitches."

"The Bitches, eh? Well, they know how to yap, all right."

"They do more than yap sometimes. Boats have been shattered there, and men, too."

"I believe you."

"The old lifeboat went to pieces there fifteen years ago."

"How many killed?"

"Four men overboard. Three corpses were picked up south of the island. The fourth man managed to cling safely to one of the rocks. You can see him walking around St. David's any day. He's the undertaker."

They drifted beneath the lantern on its staff and floated into the boathouse. Tom and Bransonby clambered ashore.

THEY were in a small building of patent modernity, its lower masonry of stone, the water basis in the middle occupying half the floor area with a U-shaped wharf laid down in granolithic on three sides. The launch was the only boat there, except for a skiff lying bottom upward at the end of one of the piers.

The illumination for the boathouse during the day was furnished partly by translucent windows of wired glass, partly by a louvre in the roof. Along the walls were racks containing oars, dusty and cobwebbed; ranged on the floor were several lobster pots. The water entrance was closed by a portcullis worked by means of a steel rope. Tom had a glimpse of a small windlass while Bransonby, who had taken a large flash-light from a special box on the wall, indicated the door which admitted one to the island.

Bransonby gave a few directions to the man who had sat in the bows during the trip, and who now raised his fingers to his forehead in acquiescence. While they departed, he commenced to bail the launch.

"I'll have to make another crossing tonight," explained Bransonby. "Lionel's nurse will sleep on the mainland, and Frost's going back to St. David's until tomorrow."

"Frost, going back!"

"Yes; he's having some supper now, I believe."

"Will there really be no one here at all, then, except yourselves—ourselves?"

"No one. Oh, the police would remain, certainly, but this is Frost's own arrangement. He's worked something out, I believe, and has hopes of following the trail on the mainland."

Now, after passing through a gateway in a twenty-foot bar-

rier that extended from face to face of living rock, the two were climbing those enormous stairs which rose between cool, dripping walls. It was impossible, looking upward along that tortuous flight, to see its top, to see even beyond the twentieth step above.

"It must be curious," said Tom, "living alone over here. But it's your best plan, I know."

"It is," agreed Bransonby. "Our way is not to mistrust anyone, you understand, but never to trust anyone either. The only servants we need except a few for seasonable things, are the man Powell and his wife. They're good, honest people, and devoted to Sir Anthony—Powell's forbears have served here for more than a century, I'm told—but they sleep on the mainland and come over here early each morning. They have their own launch and we let them bring it into the boathouse."

"But, great day, man, you're taking me in on trust, aren't you?"

"Yes, quite, if you like. But we're keeping an eye on you, Mr. Stapleton."

To himself Tom remarked, "Now, what the ding ding does that mean?"

He wasted no more breath talking. He was weary and dizzy when at last they emerged upon the topmost stair guarded by wall and gate as forbidding as those below.

"I can tell you—the very article you—need here: a good up-and-down, double-jointed, automatic elevator."

Bransonby smiled while he unlocked the gate with one of the large keys from the bunch at his waist. He flung the portal wide. Still panting, confused, his senses half aswim, Tom entered the smallest and lowermost terrace, an enclosed courtyard of flagstones with a few bushes as sole ornament. The place was bare and ugly, and in that graveyard gloom it seemed like a theatre waiting to be peopled by a particularly sullen company of ghosts.

"The Persian Terrace," said Bransonby, and the sound of his voice—so it would have been in that spot with any other voice—sent a shiver through Tom. "No one can account for the name."

They moved thirty paces across this dismal close, and five steps upward, into the next court, where in addition to the low shrubs a good many ornamental trees were growing sturdily in green that was as grim as black.

"The Monkey Terrace," Bransonby explained.

"Also unaccounted for?"

"Monkey puzzles, I suppose. Anyhow, there are some old ones here. But they may have been set here because of the name."

The Monkey Terrace extended some two hundred feet in both dimensions. Among its huddled greeneries, Tom thought, there was shade for many a lurking assassin or gaunt-eyed spook.

Five other steps led to the inmost courtyard through another gate.

"The Jericho Terrace," Bransonby announced, and added, "Don't ask me why. Shakespeare gave them their names."

"Who?" Tom barked.

"Oh, Shakespeare Veryan, I mean. Flourished about 1790. He built this place, you know. Shakespeare wasn't his real name either, only the nickname he earned for his literary abilities—save the mark! Are you a literary lad, by any chance?"

"No siree. Why?"

"Oh, if a tame bookworm ever happens to visit here, he is usually rejoiced to learn that the castle was begun the same year that Walpole published 'Otranto,' or 'Udolpho,' perhaps it was. It means nothing to me."

"I think I've read those books. Weird performances."

In fact, Tom retained a vivid memory of the "Gothic" tales Bransonby had mentioned, as well as of others read while toiling with a college course in English Lit. It was the apparatus he chiefly recalled, the whispering galleries, sealed passages, secret trap-doors, and general mechanism of wheels within wheels so readily served up by the eighteenth century masters of shock and thrill.

But just now the American was looking this way and that. The Jericho Terrace, on which he stood, appeared to be the parent of the Persian Terrace. It had the same barren aspect, gave the same impression of an emptiness that waited to be filled, inspired, therefore, the same faint dread. Its walls extended round the castle on three sides, forming only a narrow strip to the west and east (where it verged on the cliffs), but leaving an expanse to northward, where the principal entrance to the building was visible.

Kestrel's Eyrie itself was not as romantic as it might have been in aspect, Tom admitted. In the darkness which had almost come, its dusky reds and purples had turned to different degrees of black. Its mass was squat and square; the circular towers at the northern corners seemed excrescences in the design. Above the central entrance, which alone was enhanced with a pointed arch (having a feeble grotesque sneering down), was a circular window; and the towers were pierced with lancets at top and bottom. Otherwise the façade was a model of right-angularity, in its tiny crenellations, in its faintly discernable stripe-work of differently tinted stones, in its barred windows, two above and two below.

"Shall we go in?" asked Bransonby.

"Right," said Tom, looking upward for a final glimpse of the towers and parapet against the skies. Instantly he gave a low, long-drawn, toneless whistle.

For a hand was reaching out from the highest window of the

eastern tower, holding a handkerchief which waved and fluttered bravely in the breeze, and was gone!

"Eh?" inquired Bransonby, turning in the double doorway. He had heard only an indistinct sound.

"Beg pardon. I had to admire your sky."

The blood was whizzing through Tom's brain, but the surprises seemed to have only begun. He was standing, he discovered, in a gigantic hall; indeed, blink and stare as hard as he could, he was unable to fix its limits.

"Bransonby! I'm all at sea! I can't find myself."

He was still looking this way and that, striving to gauge the depths of the room. Beneath a roof of black wood panels which seemed to sparkle with points of golden light, the walls were draped with sheer black curtains whose distances one could not judge because of the vague illumination afforded by a shaded oil lamp on a small table near the door. But the pall-like curtains were not alone in that uncertain space; white forms were posted about the hall in glistening fixity. Exquisite statues of human size, gods and goddesses on pedestals, nymphs and satyrs flitting, were revealed in their still perfection. These were not isolated figures ranged serviceably against a wall, nor did they suggest the frigid show of a museum; they were a company of one purpose and one ideal. They watched in groups of pairs, or waited in proud isolation; and when Tom thought he had discovered the farthest one—lo! the dull beam of the lamp revealed another glimmering beyond! He might have been in a hall of mirrors, where images repeated themselves countlessly, receding into the obscure.

"Did Sir Anthony collect these?" asked Tom in a subdued voice, wonderingly. For he would have expected antlered heads and striped skins to be Sir Anthony's spoil.

Bransonby laughed. "Lord, no. These were old Maverick's idea. Sir Anthony's father, you know."

"Maverick!" repeated Tom, his ears quivering. He had not

heard or read of Sir Anthony's father. "Is that a name?"

"Why, yes."

"Gee. Well, in the States, out West they say maverick when they mean a no-account steer, a sort of disgrace to the herd."

Bransonby laughed again. "This Maverick was no disgrace to our herd, let me tell you, Stapleton. He was a bit of a world-hiker and gave Sir Anthony his wandering blood. His two hobbies were the Antarctic and the Acropolis, and as he couldn't bring any booty back from the South Pole, he made up for it by fetching these stones from Greece. Some of 'em are the real thing."

Statuettes of pranking boys lined the brassy balustrades, and in the centre of the southern wall, above the dividing of the stairs, the Winged Victory poised, her shattered form sharp against the antique tapestry threaded with gold, and her ruined wings still spreading protection among her people.

The space they climbed to was a long balcony enclosing three sides of the stairs. It ran, unpartitioned, the whole breadth of the castle, even into the towers. Another lamp casting a shaded glow revealed two grand pianos in the dim amplitude of the place, and Tom looked eagerly toward the remoter tower from whose highest window the handkerchief had given its unguessable signal.

He saw only a vista of tall bookshelves in fading alcoves, and here and there a smug bust on a pedestal. But beyond these, in the bend of the tower, was a suggestion of a winding stair, a stair Arthura Veryan must lately have used!

Bransonby had opened a door at the left of the stairhead and showed the way. A stride or two, a left turning, and they were walking along a carpeted passage which stretched beyond the beam of the big man's torch.

"The Long Corridor, this is. Bedrooms on the right, top of the Hall of Curtains on t'other side."

All sorts of memories recurred to Tom at the mention of that name. This was a route that red-handed Murder had followed. Through a door opening at the far end Standish Nicholson had been lured to his doom. At a junction with another passage Robert Veryan had fainted, while Someone or Something had tried to enter Sir Anthony's door.

"Arthura's room," Bransonby whispered gruffly, pausing for a gesture at the entrance to the second chamber of the right-hand series. "She'll be sorry to miss you tonight, Stapleton. But she went to get some sleep early this evening. She's relieving Mrs. Powell with Crabtree later on."

Tom thought of the handkerchief. "I'm sorry, too," he answered in an undertone. "I'm looking forward to meeting her."

Bransonby made no response, and they went on in silence, passing a corridor which struck off to the left, passing a door on the right, turning into the next left-hand hallway, crossing the very spot where Robert Veryan had suffered his fainting fit. There were doors on both sides now, but Tom had too vivid a memory of the plan of the castle not to recognize the first door on the right as Lionel Crabtree's, and the second—

Bransonby turned inquiringly toward the American, who had stopped abruptly, staring at the fateful door. It was unusually heavy-looking, the lintel no wider than the posts, a mass of broad oak strips, without panels or any other vulnerable part: it loomed stolid, uncompromising, as if it had stood there always, not to admit, but to bar ingress. Its colour in the light of Bransonby's torch was a uniform dead black.

Tom touched the great, two-handled knob that Murder had grasped once upon a time.

"Whew!"

"Sir Anthony's door," said Bransonby in a low voice. He did not realize how perfect Tom was in the details of the other tragedy. "Locked and bolted as long as I've been here. You get to Sir Anthony through Mottram's bedroom. Mottram's the

man he saved, you know, a long time ago in that attack near Salisbury. That's my door across the hall."

They went into Mottram's strange room, like a space that had been squeezed, compressed at one end, with its narrow windows overlooking the sound. The bed was disturbed.

"James has to do his sleeping when he can," Bransonby remarked. "He's Sir Anthony's special guard. Quiet, now."

Tom went on tip-toe.

The rest of that night was like increasing nightmare. Tom's memories were confused; later he tried to pick them apart and give them consecutiveness. But he could recall only impressions and short snatches of that hour.

The lamplight was dim, high up on the wall of the large room. The stone was almost bare. In one corner a drapery concealed what was no doubt a wardrobe space. There was the low medicine cupboard at the head of the bed, its door ajar, revealing quaint, rounded shelves and an array of tinted bottles. There were two pictures, each hanging against a gilded cloth which made a frame. Tom could not remember what the pictures were about. There was the black door, too, with great flanges and padlocks strong as a donjon's.

Tom remembered two men. James Mottram was of a blue pallor, horribly mutilated about the face and lacking the thumb of his right hand. Robert Veryan was short and small-boned, except for the head and hands and feet, great splay feet. His huge nose and fleshy gash of a mouth showed plain in spite of his full black beard. His hands were knuckly, and when he spoke he showed a smiling tooth, and altogether he reminded Tom of a certain person who had been efficient in his way, and whom he had seen in the Chamber of Horrors only two days ago: Dr. Crippen.

How could Clegyrn forecast that the man lying on the bed would live? Sir Anthony was so dreadfully emaciated, so dreadfully pale. There were the features Tom had memorized from

many a newspaper section: the wave of grey hair; the curled moustache, less grey; the broad, squared brow; the heavy and determined Veryan jaw, such as a man would need to have to live through these tribulations.

But Sir Anthony was old, and had lived by pouring out his strength. He lay utterly wasted and exhausted. His senseless hands touched the edge of the counterpane. The deep-set grey eyes rolled, but Tom could not believe they saw.

For just a moment the American felt an overmastering pity and a devastating rage. Who had done this? Who? Who? The room became a blur, while the black beard and smiling tooth, the blanched, scarred features, the medicine cupboard, and the vague lamp whirled about the vortex of a haggard, time-worn face.

Tom pulled himself together. Tired out as he was from travel and excitement, he clung to his little strength with determined lip.

"Phew! I nearly did a faint then myself. Must be something in the atmosphere."

He looked at Sir Anthony again. The wan lips moved, but the brain behind could not know what words they shaped. What were they muttering over and over? "I must live. I must live. I must live."

Tom, to Bransonby: "Does he know I'm here?"

"We told him you were probably coming. He expects you. Too much danger of shock otherwise. I think he'll recognize you."

Tom bent down, saw the bones of the face standing out clearly, heard the breath struggle in the throat. What should he say? Try to be sensible.

"I hope you're better, Sir Anthony."

Wonderful! The wounded man moved the thirteen or fourteen muscles needed for a smile; for a few moments his eyes ceased their rolling and gazed into those of Tom.

"I must live. I will live."

Someone else was in the room, a quick-moving little dark woman in white cap and apron, carrying two small trays with bottles and glasses. She set the trays on the lone table beside Sir Anthony and drew Bransonby aside, but all could hear her speak.

"Inspector Frost is leaving when you are ready, sir."

"You'll come too, Mrs. Powell?"

"As soon as I've given Mr. Lionel his draught. Then he can be left until Miss Veryan goes to sit by him."

"Very well, then." Bransonby turned to Tom. "I must be going with these people. How about some supper yourself, Stapleton? You look pale around the gills."

"No, no thanks. I couldn't eat."

"Do you want to go to bed, then?"

"Are the others going?"

"No; they'll wait for me. It's the rule for us all to retire at the same time. But you needn't."

"Yes, I will. I'll wait for you."

They went through the passage again and down into the whirlpool of white forms, to a small room beyond at the foot of the eastern tower. Bransonby went off, and a little later they listened to the sound of persons departing across the terraces. The scarred man, Mottram, returned from locking the entrance doors.

Then followed that awful hour of waiting in a small museum of curios and objects of *virtu*. "Shakespeare's relics," someone called them. But although some cases held trinkets that may have decked beaux under the Georges, others contained things that must have been delved for, jars and utensils that had lain under earth since the legions had been called back to Rome to defend the empire they could not save.

Mottram had brought the lamp in from the hall of statuary. No speech, only watching. The man with the scars that cut from lip to chin, the torn cheek, the missing thumb and the

wheal across the forehead: what a rain of knives and daggers he must have been out in! The other with his slight frame, big, bushy head, and restless eyes; never were such restless eyes.

Once the bearded man leaned across the table and showed a tooth. "You heard Sir Anthony?"

"Yes."

"Saying he must live?"

"Yes."

"Do you know why?"

"I don't understand. Anyone might—"

"The Romans in Pembroke, the Romans in Pembroke," cried the other. "His work is not finished."

The man with the face cut to pieces still was silent.

"We hope he will be spared," said the bearded man abruptly. He settled into speechlessness.

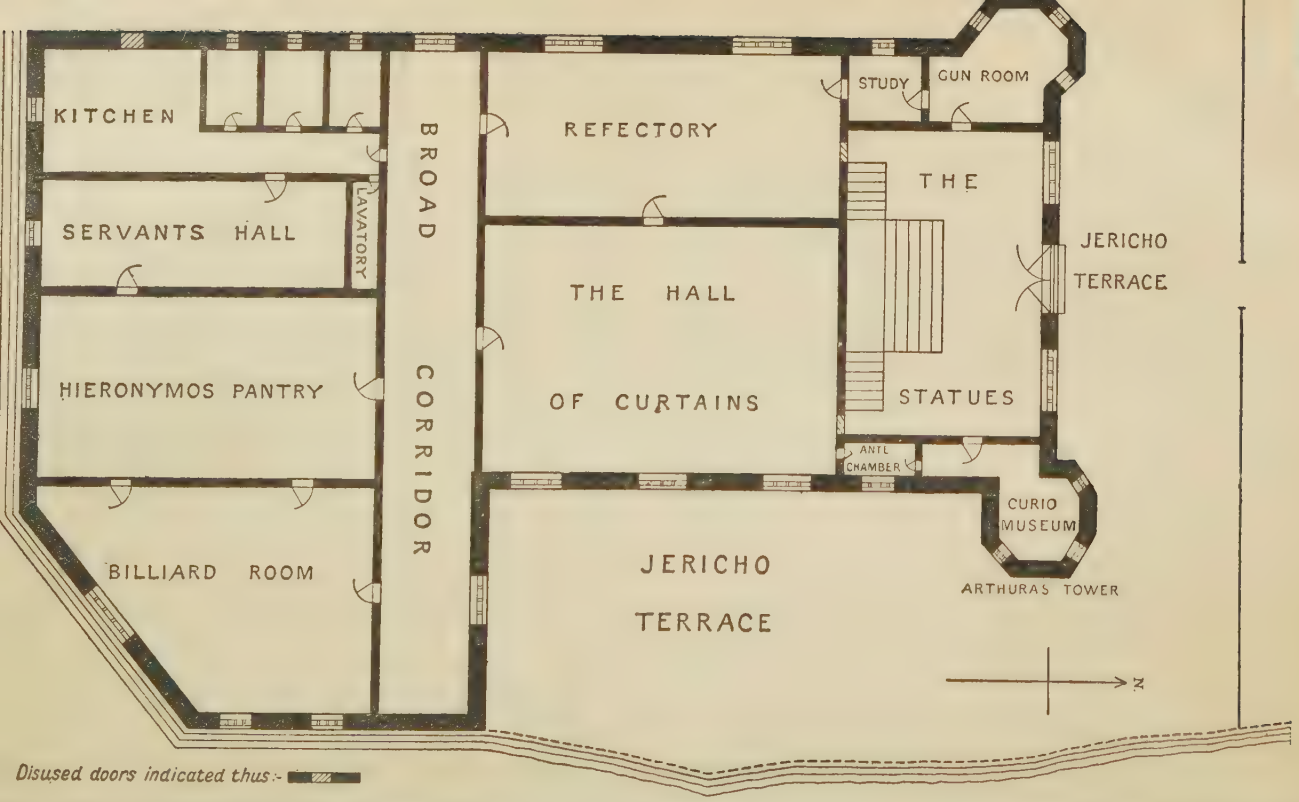
At last Bransonby's return: a whistling and a call, "Hullo, I'm here. Is everything all right?"

The two men stiffened, alert—then relaxed. Mottram unlocked the door, the bearded man holding the lamp.

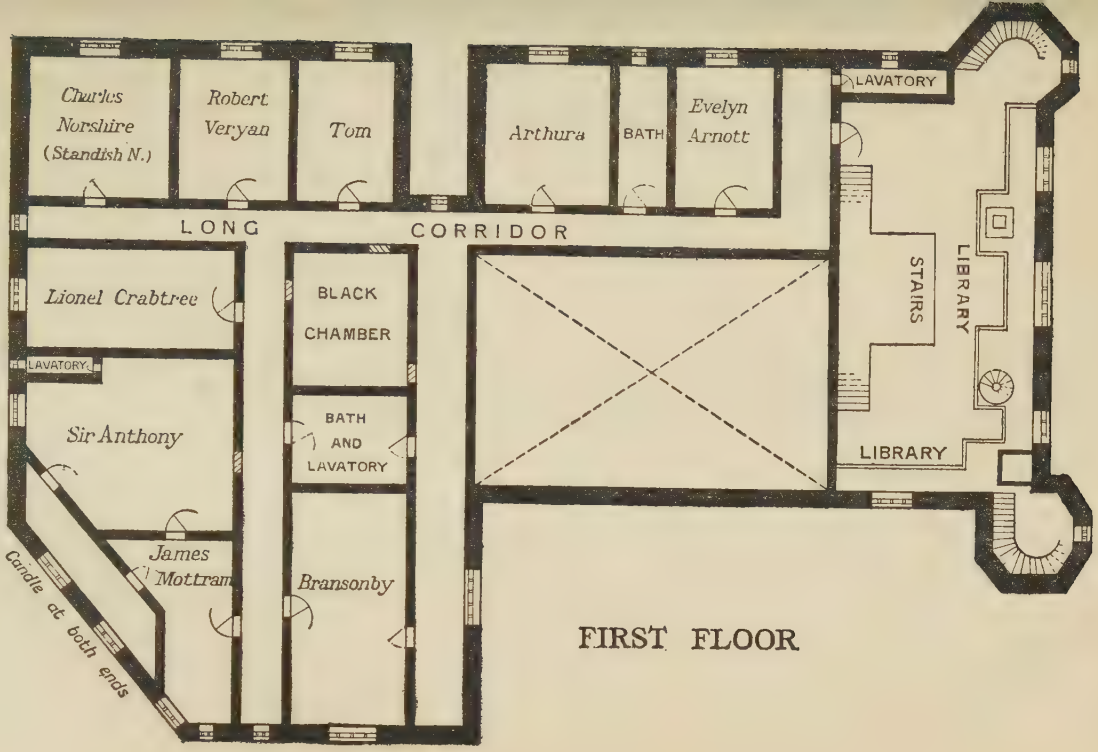
Then going the rounds together through all the rooms and all the corridors, by candle-light, examining every chamber, scrutinizing each bolt and bar.

Bransonby said, "Several doors here have never been used since Sir Anthony came. The rear entrance, to the kitchen; these doors from the hall of statues."

Many, many rooms, with carpets that felt to the foot like a thick and springy lawn: the Refectory (black furnishings, white curtains) where Tom saw the grand round dinner table and eighteenth century mantelpiece; Hieronymo's Pantry, with its Adam chairs and tall-boy; the billiard room, one wall heaped with old chests and cases; the Hall of Curtains, where the candles revealed the rich tones of rare woods or evoked glancing sparkles at corners and edges. There the arras moved faintly, perpetually, up to the hidden depths of the ceiling. Those vast



GROUND FLOOR KESTREL'S EYRIE CASTLE


Charles Norshire (Standish N.)
Robert Veryan
Tom
Arthura
BATH
Evelyn Arnott
LAVATORY
LONG CORRIDOR
STAIRS
LIBRARY
LIBRARY
Lionel Crabtree
BLACK CHAMBER
LAVATORY
Sir Anthony
BATH AND LAVATORY
James Mottram
Bransonby
Candle at both ends

FIRST FLOOR

dark crimson curtains might be Death itself; against them the little living people moved like mannikins, pathetically small. Bransonby revealed the place—the almost unbearably curious place—near the Refectory door where the dagger had been wiped dry.

Tom examined the lock of one of the windows carefully. The bearded man took sudden interest, his eyes bright. He was labouring under suppressed excitement. He was Robert Veryan, who had fainted.

Tom's voice: "It's all right. I was only seeing how it worked."

The antechamber was tiny, and bare, except for a small table and the hat-stand which had broken the window in its fall. The star-shaped gap in the pane let in the cold night air. There was no stain on the floor now, in this room or elsewhere, not even in the Refectory, where Sir Anthony had bled so much.

Then the return to the first storey.

"Here," said Bransonby, throwing open a door in the Long Corridor, "stick your head in here. The dark chamber, we call it—three doors, no windows."

Tom peered in rather gingerly. A table with plates and basins stood in one corner; a horizontal rod from which hung discarded jackets, coats, and suits all covered with a dusty cloth, occupied another. The rest of this fairly considerable room was filled, in some cases almost to the ceiling, with trunks, and corded bales and bundles of documents.

"Receipted bills from the year One, and the Lord knows what else," explained Bransonby. "We use it as a photographic darkroom sometimes. Stuffy place."

They left Tom at his door, between Arthura Veryan's and Robert Veryan's.

"Good night." Mottram with his candle in his hand went down the passage to his queer room next Sir Anthony's.

Tom unpacked by candle light. "Atmosphere," he said to himself. "This place is full of it. It's clammy with it. If I lived here

a couple of years, I'd get to believe in magic, alchemy, witchcraft, astrology . . . atmosphere . . . that's what I've got to fight."

His hand fell on an ordnance map of Pembrokeshire he had bought yesterday. "I'd better get some of the facts cold. Not a bad idea; that'll help to break the spell."

He unfolded the map and commenced to study. St. David's, two miles from the coast, no real town nearer than Haverfordwest. Fishguard way north, beyond that place Llanrian, where old Clegyrn lived. A broken, rock-bound coast, all right. A beach of sand here and there. The place of the lifeboat station —oh, yes, Porth 'Stinian.

A yawn.

Bed. Lying awake. The whole day concentrating itself to a thin wedge and forcing itself into his brain. Bransonby, the launch, the rigmarole: Anthony, Vernon, Roger, and Sally . . . Anthony, Vernon . . . Rog . . .

A sharp memory wedging itself in: that gabby stranger on the train, whose talk had sounded so momentous, and who had taken alarm when he discovered that Tom, too, was on the bus at Solva. A mighty queer, peculiar meeting and parting—and still Tom's secret, after six hours.

But above all and behind all, the black door, and against it the yellow light of a candle burning, burning, burning.

Later, peace. The door had changed to the illimitable darkness of the heavens; the candle to a handkerchief dipping and fluttering against the sky.

VI. The Woman in the House

SLEEP came at last in one of the darkest hours, for Tom was not awake at the intimation of dawn. He slept sound, for he did not hear what went on in the corridors that joined outside his room: opening and shutting of doors, movement of hurried feet upon stone, anxious whispers.

He was roused suddenly, and raised himself on an elbow in his four-poster bed. He looked about with vexed brows, unable to grasp the meaning of the canopy above his head, of the light oak panelling about the walls, of the deep embrasure and the window with diamond panes. Then the whole Veryan story struck him with a sharp impact, like a physical blow, and he lay back on the pillows, whistling softly, with lack-lustre eye.

"Gosh, how strange for *me* to be *here!* . . . But once on a time," he assured himself, "my ancestors were used to castles and things like that, killings included."

In comfort he surveyed the pleasant room. His clothing lay in islets on the floor, but the paraphernalia of his work which he had brought with him was stacked neatly on the dresser. "Houses and Hovels," "The Principles of Refrigeration," "Mattresses for the Poor," "By-Pass Roads in Manchester," and the long lists, reports, symposia, blueprints, statistics, and the rest of the delectable grist of his profession were stacked in tidy heaps beside comb, brush, shaving tackle, and Mennen's for Men.

His watch on the chair at the bedside reported nearly ten o'clock. He had slept well and rested well. With a kick he sent the bedclothes flying, and with a leap he stood in the centre of the room. He looked outside the door and found a can of

water still more than lukewarm, placed there by someone who had not waited for a response to his call. He went about shaving.

While he dressed he looked frequently from the window, noting the long, level, empty fields reaching westward to the roots of the hill, an occasional rabbit humping itself from bracken to bracken, the inward gouge of the small bay to the north, and the restless flight of many birds along the cliffs, their wings and bodies like bright sparks in the sun.

"Yes, this certainly is good." Tom almost felt ashamed of feeling so keen and happy in the place where the Veryans were suffering their tragic fates. "Well it's a physical impossibility, that's what it is," he told himself; "it's just naturally impossible for anyone to feel different on a morning like this."

He traversed the long corridor which led to the balcony above the stairs, looked across the carpeted library to the tower of the handkerchief, then trotted downstairs into the hall of statues, which still seemed like a nook in the universe that had been warped out of place. Tom threaded his way amongst the white laughing boys and leaping satyrs, under the cold, appraising eyes of the divinities, to the entrance doors. Outside, the broad flags of the Jericho Terrace, with grass growing between them, looked almost inviting in the sunlight.

"This seems to be the original uninhabited house," Tom muttered. "Am I here all alone?" He strolled out turning along the face of the castle toward the mainland, and proceeding around the tower of the handkerchief, approached the wall which overlooked the sound. He sat there on the ramparts, where the end of the Jericho Terrace verged on the ravine, looking across the water and over the whole peninsula of St. David's.

Someone's boots were creaking on the flags.

Tom turned and recognized the man Powell, who had gone into St. David's to fetch him yesterday. Last evening he had looked the model chauffeur in cap and leggings; now with tailed

coat and black bow he seemed the embodiment of perfect butlerdom, except that his countenance had an unusually lugubrious cast. While he approached, Tom had it on the tip of his tongue to ask, "What's the matter?"

But Powell quickly said, "Good morning, sir. I saw you from the Hall of Curtains. You will find your breakfast waiting for you there when you are ready." There was no doubt that Powell was a Welshman.

"Thanks very much. How is Sir Anthony this morning?"

"No worse, sir, they say." But the fact did not cheer Powell. "Doctor Clegyrn has just arrived. Will you be coming in at once, sir, or shall I ask Mrs. Powell to—"

"Right away suits me."

Powell nodded and preceded the American around the tower.

Robert Veryan stood in the castle entrance. He looked no more prepossessing by day than he did in the night time. "What a beak!" Tom exclaimed to himself while he approached that high-bridged, jutting promontory. Veryan's beard, though thick in patches, was straggly, revealing the heavy bones of his face and the chin which dropped to a fantastically elongated point. To Tom's sharp eyes it revealed also that the skin beneath the beard was pale to sickliness.

Tom remembered suddenly that it was Robert Veryan who had been awakened in the night of the invasion and had slept soundly thereafter. "You may have snoozed then, but you haven't slept much since," thought Tom grimly, while his lips said, "Good morning."

"Truly," answered Veryan displaying the tooth. "Have you breakfasted?"

"I'm on my way."

"Then I shall not detain you. But I must apologize for our not waiting for you. We thought that you would be fatigued."

"Please don't—"

"Powell did not tell you, of course," proceeded Veryan in a

matter of fact tone, "but you must know, Mr. Stapleton, that Lionel died last night."

Tom moved so quickly that Veryan retreated. "Died! Great—"

"Arthura was alone with him," said the bearded man, making knots of his ungainly fingers. "He passed away so quietly that she did not know the hour."

"How terrible. She must be terribly upset."

"It was his heart, no doubt," said Veryan speculatively. "He had a better chance than Sir Anthony, but for that shaky organ."

"Awfully hard luck. I'm mighty sorry." The frantic episode of two nights ago was thrilling through the American's memory anew: Crabtree, smelling blood before he leaped into the fight; Sir Anthony, waiting through the hours of darkness, too much enfeebled even to cry for help, while his blood saturated the carpet and pooled on the floor. Whose hand? Well, Tom resolved, this was the time to tackle Veryan about a point Bransonby had left too vague last night on the sound.

"Mr. Veryan, what about that man Crabtree said they found on the balcony up there?"

The other's big bright eyes swung their surprised gaze sharply into the American's.

"Man on the balcony? Ah, yes, they tell me Lionel seemed to think—"

"Think? Then there couldn't have been anything in it?"

Veryan's ogling went on. "Unhappy Lionel! Delirium, Mr. Stapleton. How could there have been such a one?"

"Has Sir Anthony said anything about it?"

"Sir Anthony knows nothing of such a person. We can only suppose—But I am keeping you from your breakfast."

"I—almost—"

"Come, now; don't say you have no appetite. We must go on, Mr. Stapleton, though all sentenced to death."

He said it with an effort at simplicity, and yet, Tom thought,

while he watched him ambling toward the Monkey Terrace, with a strained and borrowed courage, the bravado of a frightened man.

Having gone the rounds the night before, the American had no difficulty in finding his way into the Hall of Curtains. The direct entrance had once been through a door which was now blocked, but he knew the path among the statues to the door concealed beneath the curtains, through the tower-room with its "Shakespearean" curios, and through the bare little vestibule, with its broken window.

"So it was Crabtree and not Sir Anthony who lay here in his gore. Curious, the confusion; makes no difference, I suppose."

In the Hall of Curtains, the deep red carpet, the hangings of crimson, and the tapestries, wore a pleasant, even a cheerful aspect in the broad sunlight pouring in from the three eastern windows. Near one of these, now swung partly open, a number of antique rosewood screens secluded an informal breakfast room. There the American found a substantial mess of eggs and bacon under silver covers, a brown steaming teapot, a white steaming water-jug, a pile of toast, golden slabs of butter, and a golden dish of marmalade.

He demolished these rapidly. For all the restraint it caused, Crabtree's death might have been that of a petty African chief, once Tom came within sight of the laden table and sniffed the aroma rising from it. So he thought, feeling somewhat ashamed, when he paused midway in his progress and realized that his fast of last night had produced an unprecedented hunger. Not the fast alone; the sun, the sky brilliant with wings, the stirring air which sniffed of salt, the view of waters shimmering and of the many-coloured landscape across the sound; all these had awakened in him an unguessed degree of physical relish and raised his spirits to an exalted pitch.

"Impossible not to be happy," he repeated to himself, although he remembered Crabtree dead. "Gee, life is good."

Someone commenced playing a piano on the balcony above the statues.

For Tom, what followed was very strange. He "liked" music, and had dutifully heard a good deal of it in New York, London, Paris, and other haunts of art. His favourite form, however, was opera, wherein there was stuff to engross him apart from the musical content; whenever he listened to instruments alone, he would drift into thought amid which the music was only a pattern dimly perceived.

Yet this morning, although he had been watching the world outside the window with interest, and there still remained a great deal to clench his attention, it was the music he followed, and the vista formed the background.

His mind was tangled in the net of notes, a luminous, hazy, throbbing net that changed into a waterfall of sweet, cool spray, and changed again to sheer colour, not of rainbows, but of the mind. These colours lost their life while the music merged into the slow tread of a dead march where the last river met a tideless sea. Then the colours returned again, changed to the vibrant network, flashing now in a final blaze wherein all the particles of the universe were consumed.

After that silence came for a while, but Tom was still staring before him and seeing nothing at all when the playing recommenced; no cosmic fate in this music, but the desire and pain of human hearts, at first tentative, halting, disturbed in their yearning, then bolder, keener, bitterer in their wrongs. The music rose to a spinning, furious rain of notes, amid which sounded shouts of encouragement to the soul in its perilous voyage; and the end was a silence more breathless than any cry.

Tom did not yet recognize the great Toccata in F-sharp Minor. In a tumult and tangle of inextricable feelings, he leaped from his chair and went restlessly striding about the room, like one affected by hearing music for the first time. He wanted to

shout an answer to calls from the depths, he wanted to weep, to do great deeds, to conquer the stars.

"That was the Veryan woman all right. It almost needed a man to play that way, and nobody else here could have played like a man. Except Bransonby, of course; but I'll bet you couldn't tell the difference between him and a hippo at the instrument. What a woman she must be!"

He had all but drifted into another imagining of tall and stately womanhood with commanding mien, coils of bronze or golden hair, eyes of azure depths or clear light blue: a goddess before whom he would prostrate himself—when a dark little slip of a girl, with short black hair clinging close to her head like a bright cap, parted the arras and came like a mouse into the Hall. She was so very small that standing there startled beside the tall crimson curtain she seemed an elf come exploring.

"Oh! I didn't—why, you must be Mr. Stapleton."

At once he knew that he was welcome. He had turned from the window before he heard the quick, merry voice. He looked down at her; she was coming forward from the curtain in her simple dark blue frock with a chain of amber beads to match her wide brown eyes. She was smiling, and Tom, whose jaw had dropped, managed to smile back until he was seized with an unrestrainable desire to laugh.

The brown eyes held an inquiring, almost hurt look. Tom ceased at once.

"I couldn't help it, Miss Veryan. Honestly I couldn't."

"But why?" she asked, though the troubled expression had cleared away. "Am I so funny?"

"Not you—me!"

"Oh, no. I'm sure you aren't. Do tell me what you mean."

"I'll have to own up, I see. The fact is, Miss Veryan, I'd

been wondering what you would be like. I hope you don't mind."

"No, no, indeed. Why, I've been wondering for ever so long what *you* would be like. Am I such a terrible disappointment?"

"Far from it," exclaimed Tom heartily, with a vigorous head-shaking that made her break into a new smile. "Very much the other way. I'd been picturing you as someone who fitted in with a distinguished family with a long line of ancestors—you know, someone quite grand and way above my head—"

"Oh, a giantess!"

"Well, not really. But I was all prepared to bow down and be trampled on by a woman I'd be scared to death of. Instead—"

"You mustn't stop, Mr. Stapleton." The brown eyes danced. "But I know how ridiculous you thought poor little me after the vision of that powerful woman."

"You'll be holding that laugh against me always, I know," lamented Tom. The earnestness in his voice was unmistakable as he added, "But I'm mighty glad I was wrong."

"And why, why?"

"Because I think we're going to be good friends."

He felt a sudden blushing constraint, for his words had been too ardently said. But Arthura Veryan answered, "I'm glad, because I think so, too. Do come out of doors. It's so glorious this morning."

Tom held open the portal beneath the curtain and followed the short, swinging frock and the twinkling little feet. During the interchange of speech he had not recovered wholly from his first amazement. Had this bit of a thing driven those thunders from the piano on the balcony? Incredible!

He called ahead to her while they passed among the statues.

"I heard you playing, didn't I, just now?"

"Yes, I felt I had to play then. I hope I didn't disturb your breakfast. Sometimes people are frightfully annoyed to hear me practising."

"Practising! Disturb!" Tom volleyed, now standing beside her in the entrance. She was well below his shoulder in height. That her music had disturbed him and indeed sent him mentally sprawling seemed of no consequence in his bluff denial. "I should say not! I'm glad you came down and found me, all right, but I wish you could have gone on and on. It was a revelation of what—well, you certainly made the instrument murmur; and that means talk, moan, twitter—anything you wanted it to do!"

Arthura was gay. "I hope you're not just pulling my leg. I'm the one who's laughing now, you see; I hope you don't mind. I think you have such a funny way of saying things."

"It's the only way I know how to tell how I feel," declared Tom.

"It's a pleasant way, and I'm so glad you liked my music. I've played that toccata ever since I was fourteen, Mr. Stapleton. It was one of mother's favourite Bach things, and I learned it because she loved it."

They had strolled through the gateway in the high southern wall of the Monkey Terrace, and were among the dull-hued evergreens.

He said, "You haven't taught yourself, though, have you?"

"No: I'd never have learned anything then," she laughed. "I practise and practise almost every day, and twice a year Uncle Anthony takes me up to London to my master for a week, and he tells me that I am still promising. Some day I *will* be a great pianist like mother, Mr. Stapleton, I will, I will, I will!"

Tom looked admiringly at the small face at his elbow. The dark flush intensified its eagerness, and the flash of the brown eyes was like a banner's gleam. Misguided novelists might have called it a "boyish" face; yet it was far franker than any boy's. The feature which showed most character and maturity as well, was the steadfast little jaw, the Veryan jaw, famous in portraits, extolled in story.

"I'll bet you will, too," Tom exclaimed, swinging his arms. "This master of yours—who is he?"

"Dammerung. You've heard of him, haven't you? He's fearfully old and exceedingly critical, but they say he's the greatest teacher in the world. He hardly ever gives concerts nowadays."

"Well, he wouldn't have faint-praised you with any 'promisings' if he'd heard you just now. I've heard him play, too. He didn't mix up my internal economy the way you did. I'll bet he never heard you play like that."

"Do you really think so? I felt—I felt terribly when I was doing it."

"You made me shiver all right."

Glancing at his companion again, for the first time he saw her face look sad, and he felt a secret relief in the fact. Every moment since she had come into the Hall, he had been struggling vaguely to reconcile her seeming unconcern with the tragic business in the castle. He could not believe that last night this girl had sat at the bedside of a man whose life had flickered out like a guttering candle. Only by supposing that some of Robert Veryan's spirit had enabled her to achieve a tranquil courage resembling hardness, could he comprehend her light mood this morning. Then he remembered that his own mood had been light, and that she was young.

He felt that she was looking at him, and turned to catch a rather anxious light in her eyes.

"I think I know what *you* are thinking," she said.

Tom murmured, "It's not worth a cent."

"Are you wondering why I can't seem unhappy? Tell me the truth, Mr. Stapleton."

Tom floundered in a search for defensive words, but his flaming face betrayed him.

"You were, indeed. And I'm afraid I can't make you understand. You think I'm very unfeeling, don't you?"

This suggestion Tom could deny manfully and positively. "I heard you playing this morning. That was enough for me."

Her brow wrinkled in bewilderment a moment; then her frown dissolved into a smile. "Oh, I see. You mean that you believe I'm human after all."

"Human is no word for it," said Tom.

Through a gate with a surly hinge, they had left the Jericho Terrace for a grassy road that was little more than a bridle-path.

"Where are we going?" Arthura asked, smiling again.

"Wherever you give orders. Only—your shoes—won't they be torn out here in the country?"

"Dear me, no. These boots have climbed everywhere on the island." She pointed a slim foot for inspection. "You see; they are tough little things. Would you like to go to the top of the hill? There's a carn there—or a cairn, if you like it better."

She pointed to the southern hill, which stood like a crumbling pyramid, with grey, rock-encumbered platforms.

"If you're sure—"

She had already skipped ahead, calling, "Come along."

A short distance farther on they passed the ruins which in former decades had been the home farm of Kestrel's Eyrie. Arthura pointed among the outhouses, indicating the decaying walls of an old stone chapel with a belfry, a building which had known many vicissitudes.

It was not long before the walkers were in the region of knee-high elastic heather, which, Arthura told him, tried to establish a hold all around the hill, but was wind-stripped on every side except the east. Presently they passed a covered water-tank, well above the elevation of the castle. The grey boulders they encountered on each of the many platforms had a curious appearance of disordered regularity, as if they had once been arranged in some beloved pattern. Tom said so.

Arthura assented. "Oh, yes, I think there must have been a city here once, long, long ago. The Bronze Age people, perhaps. Uncle Anthony thinks they were the same race who built the hut circles and the wall on St. David's Head. I'll take you there some day, if you like. Oh, I'm beating you, even with your long legs."

The tips of her boots found many safe crannies where he could not secure a foothold. In a quarter of an hour they had gained the summit of the hill together and had mounted the cairn that crowned it. Encircling them was the granite of grey-green lichens, crumbled here to boulders, there to fragments of sharp cleavage, there again to black soil in which grew tiny red flowers.

The cairn itself was fifteen feet high and more than twice its height in basic circumference. It was built entirely of stones about the size of a human head. At the top these had been re-arranged to form a seat comfortable for two, and there Tom and Arthura rested at first with their faces to the breeze and to the sea of white breaking crests and white scurrying wings, with a white lighthouse faint on a distant islet. Below the cairn, the western side of the hill dropped sheer to the beating sea itself.

Then Tom and Arthura turned their backs to the breeze, looked across the flat table-top of the island, and across the sound. From this elevation, they could make out the whole crook of St. Bride's Bay and the cliffs hemming the upper coast nearly as far as Fishguard.

But Arthura's gaze was concentrated on Kestrel's Eyrie, dwarfed by the mile between. Presently she looked at Tom with a trace of mischief.

"Now tell me honestly, Mr. Stapleton, what do you think of our castle?"

"Well-l," he hesitated, embarrassed, "from here—"

"Oh, no. You've seen it at close quarters. Tell me truly, weren't you disappointed?"

"Well, in a way—"

"It wasn't what you had expected, was it?"

"It doesn't seem like one of those old castles you read about."

"It isn't—it isn't at all! But really I ought to explain. I'm supposed to, to visitors, when we have any. It isn't our fault we have such a silly, cramped little castle. It's Shakespeare's—but of course he wasn't really to blame either."

"What lets him out?"

"Why, Uncle Anthony says he lived in a time when they didn't understand about those things. It's just such a castle as an eighteenth century virtuoso would build in imitation of the Gothic, if he took it into his head to do such a thing. Oh, Mr. Stapleton, look down at the castle, quick. Hector's signalling to us."

It was possible to see the entrance of Kestrel's Eyrie from the cairn. Down there Bransonby was visible and recognizable, making great beckoning gestures.

"He wants us to come back," said Arthura. "We must go, I'm afraid. I wonder what it can be."

"Nothing serious, do you think?"

"I hope not. I don't think it can be anything—new."

"Great guns, no!"

She had waved back, and they were descending the cairn.

"See there, by jiminy," Tom cried. "That's peculiar, if you ask me."

"What is it? I don't see anything."

"Near the lifeboat station. Did you notice that launch, the one that's going into the port?"

"The one with three men in it?"

"Yes. Well, I saw it a minute ago, and it was heading across to the island. I wonder what's made it turn back."

"I'm powerfully glad to find you stronger this morning, Sir Anthony. That's all I can say, but I guess you understand. I've read most everything that's been written about your adventures, but I haven't come across any that gave me this thrill or made me feel so bucked that you've got out of the woods."

Against the pillows the old man's face still looked desperately white; the smile that glimmered across it for a moment seemed to hold a secret.

"Yes, you have read," murmured Sir Anthony; somehow Tom divined that the smile was for that. "You're right. This is the worst pass I've ever come to. I'll be lucky to come out of it with breath in me—eh, Trefor? But I have the luck."

Tom himself showed a touch of the Veryan jaw, and his voice rose before it broke. "Last night I could have strangled the brute that had—"

Sir Anthony's faint smile encouraged, but his voice held a thin irony. "Ah, last night! I was very ill last night, wasn't I? Your intention survived last night?"

"I—I don't understand."

"The fall, I mean—my fall—our fall."

Tom was troubled now. "Fall? What fall do you mean, sir?"

"What a fall it must have been," muttered Sir Anthony almost to himself. "Yet he doesn't remember it. He had read about us, and thought great things of us, and then found us—as we are. What a discredit to our history! Not the aloof, austere Veryans, strangers in this workaday world, slightly tarnished gods, perhaps—but merest mortals, haggard, watchful-eyed, except Hector there. What did you think, Mr. Stapleton, when

you found that I was an old man delirious and short of breath? Were you greatly disappointed, then?"

"I was mad, Sir Anthony, mad clear through."

A person Tom had just seen for the first time was the one to break the silence. This was Mr. Hawkwell, the solicitor from near St. David's, an alert yet dried-up morsel of a man. His face was scribbled all over with friendly lines, as if golden legacies, deeds of gift, marriage settlements, and the records of family increase were written there.

He addressed the old doctor, who was lingering before the pair of watercolours on the wall as if they had never caught his attention before. His voice had a crooning quality that struck Tom as a trifle too mellifluous. "I think Sir Anthony needs rest before he sees this new arrival who's just 'phoned; don't you, Clegyrn?"

The doctor grunted, shrugged his shoulders, which were clad in a dusty coat he might have worn earlier that morning while inspecting his poultry yard. "Much good what I think. Keep visitors out is my rule," he answered gruffly. "Who answered the telephone?"

"I did," said Bransonby shortly.

Clegyrn gave him an unpleasant look. "Who is it, anyhow, eh?"

The large man smiled without meeting his eye. "I'm saving that for a surprise, a pleasant surprise."

Tom leaned forward and tapped one of the brawny arms folded across Bransonby's chest.

"You may like to keep us in the dark, Bransonby, but aren't you a bit in the dark yourself? The launch turned back, you know."

"Probably for Frost," returned the other, but in his wide blue eyes there was a shade of doubt.

"Frost—not here?" asked Sir Anthony, directing his gaze toward Bransonby.

"No, sir. He went to St. David's last night about the time Mr. Stapleton came. There's a sergeant in the castle, though, and a constable in the boathouse."

"I didn't know, of course. No one tells me these things."

Clegyrn, rubbing his bristly chin with the palm of his hand, looked indecisively from Bransonby to Sir Anthony, whose face had fallen into repose. The doctor's countenance, in the strong beam of light which shone through the window and fell upon the door, revealed the crude animality of the man in the low, swart forehead, close-set eyes, and yellowed teeth from which the lower lip was permanently withdrawn.

While he looked down, Sir Anthony smiled. "What's up now, Trefor? Trying to think of a way to keep me from my guests? There's nothing the matter with me now."

"Nothing but the loss of half your blood and all your brains," growled Clegyrn. "You're your own worst enemy, Anthony. I've pulled you through a narrow pass, but I'm damned if I'll answer for your life, if you throw away all I've gained for you."

"Half an hour—let me have half an hour's talk and I'll promise to rest until tomorrow."

"You'll have your eternal rest," Clegyrn assured him, and relapsed into a silence more surly than his speech. He went to the window and turned his back pointedly on the room, gazing at the cleft of the escarpment where the sound reached inland.

A rap sounded on the post of the open door, and the pro-tempore butler, his heavy face slightly darkened as from some recent rebuff, entered the bedchamber. He moved rapidly to the side of the couch and said in a low tone, "A gentleman and a person have been admitted to the island. They wish to know if you will see them, sir."

"Them!"

"Yes, sir; two. Mr. Arnott is one; the other is a person who

has not been here before. How he got past the officer at the boathouse I really don't know."

"What is the stranger's name?" asked Sir Anthony.

"He declined to give it to me, sir."

"Let me attend to him," interrupted Bransonby, starting warlike from his repose against the wall.

Sir Anthony stayed the large man with a frail imperative. "Wait, Hector. We don't want another murder. Powell, what does this virtuous indignant look like?"

The servant studied a moment. "A biggish man, sir, rather boisterous. He seemed slightly, er—I shouldn't care to say, but I think—I asked Sergeant Edwards to keep an eye on him."

"Quite so," said Sir Anthony, with the bare beginning of a smile. "I think you may show him up with Mr. Arnott."

"Very good, sir." While Powell went out, his disapproving face belied his words.

"A newcomer!" muttered Sir Anthony. "This beats your secret, Hector. Who can it be?"

"He didn't 'phone," said Bransonby in an aggrieved tone. "Are you sure, sir—"

"No fear, my boy. This won't be a journalist, not so late in the day as this. Who *can* it be? Robert, can you guess? Arthura?"

But the next moment the unknown himself burst into the room, staring about him with eyes that held a smouldering look. While he studied him from crown to toe, the American observed that his rubber-based boots, though newly cleaned and blacked, were much worse battered than they had been yesterday, perked up on Tom's seat in the first class compartment!

Yes, this was the very man of the South Wales Express the day before, where the American had found him on his return from the dining coach. Above the weathered brown shoes whose soles and heels were blocks of solid rubber had been a continuance of grimy socks, ragged-edged trousers of an execrable

brown and yellow check disappearing beneath a double-breasted coat of the same pattern. Above that ruddy face wracked and scarred with signs of riotous courses, wild black hair flew like a flag of defiance.

On Tom's entrance yesterday the feet had been lowered, and the American had demurely brushed off his seat with a folded newspaper, resumed his place, and sought for the passage in "The Mystery of the Feathered Footprint" where the hero makes his brilliant deduction from the lamp and the piece of burnt string. The stranger muttered what might have been a welcome or a curse, and planted himself opposite, looking rather glum. The knees of his trousers, worn to the point where warp and woof were revealed, he drew up with great care, and he scowled at the scenery, of which, however, less became visible while the train slid through deeper and deeper grooves in the rising hills of Gloucestershire.

The American gradually became unconscious of the purplish presence, but a large nervous finger on his knee spurred him like an electric spark. He looked reproachfully at his interrupter, whose sudden intensity admitted none of the subtler perceptions. The man leaned forward with his ravaged face nearly above Tom's knees, voice and attitude alike demanding attention.

"Don' let me interrupt you," begged the stranger. "By the way I must introduce m'self properly. Charles Norshire's my name, sir, born in Northumberland, by damn, if I do say it myself. Always very pleased to meet you."

"Thanks," acquiesced Tom gloomily.

"A shentleman down at the heels, sir, but once a shentleman always a shentleman's my motto. Shimply because m' father didn't leave much of th' oof—" Tom was near the point of rising and departing when the other sank his voice to a hoarse whisper and said, "Have you seen this?" thrusting before the Amer-

ican's startled eyes the torn front page of one of the journals he had scanned the previous afternoon.

Norshire's cheeks and brow all at once seemed moist with excess of emotion; his eyes glowed like black flame; his mouth was working. He struck the paper several times with the flat of his hand.

"This consherns me, sir. Do you think I could let such a thing happen without—without taking steps? No, sir; I'll go through with it if it kills me, you have Charles Norshire's word for that—born in Northumberland, by God!"

"Holy Jehoshaphat!" Tom half-cried, losing in that instant of astonishment and surmise his repugnance and his irritation. "What do you mean?"

"I've been plundered and tormented and hounded and persecuted long enough!" exclaimed Norshire, his speech suddenly emerging clear-cut in the throes of indignation. "There may be secret death and murder there on the island, but there's worse ashore, I tell you, the hellish thing snapping at your heels that you don't know what it is, but it snaps and snarls and drives a man so that he wishes he might die. They went to the island because they were afraid of death, but they found death there, didn't they? I'm going, too, because there *is* death there, by God, and it's as well to face it and have it out, instead of this life of fear and evasion, always wondering what the next trouble will be. I can stick it as well as any man, but I've let 'em put the screws on long enough. Don't misunderstand me; I know a dodge or two—not born yesterday. I'm going to solve this mystery, sir. That's what I'm really going for."

"Norshire?—Norshire, did you say your name was?" exclaimed Tom, laying his hand on the ravelled sleeve and returning the other's close gaze, while the inside of his head felt like the works of a watch trying to tick an hour away in a minute.

At once the brassy gaze confronting his narrowed and took on a film of cunning, and the man sat back from the edge of his seat. His forefinger slid slyly alongside his nose, and a wink hovered, waiting to be born.

"I said Norshire, didn't I? That's a damn good name, sir. But that's no reason why there may not be—"

He broke off, seeming to hesitate, and Tom leaped into the gap. "No reason why there may not be a better name behind?"

But the desperate fire seemed to have deserted the other man. With a non-committal growl he settled in his place, mouth and shoulders drooping, and seemed to find sullen interest in the occasional vistas afforded by the gashed hillsides.

During the long darkness of the Severn Tunnel, occasionally relieved by a smoky yellow blob of flame from beyond the window, Tom waited to hear another rambling outburst. But none came, and presently one of the flares revealed the fact that the opposite seat was empty, Norshire having slipped away in the black interval.

"Well, I'll be ossified," declared the American. "The perfect footpad, with those rubber soles. Now, wouldn't that knock you endways? I wonder if he had the notion I'm going to St. David's."

He found him hours later when the train had disappeared around the bend beyond Haverfordwest station, and the platform seethed with passengers disentangling themselves and their luggage. Norshire, tying his shoe, straightened up to find Tom grinning at his side.

The blotched face turned one dark red, and a sharp gasp was forced from the broken lips. Norshire retreated a step, glowering and uncertain, then turned and plunged away, though it was not drink that unsteadied him. He crossed over to a large bus which was gradually becoming filled with country folk. Tom perceived by the legend on its signboard that this was the vehicle for him, too.

The bus slowly skirted the hill-clinging town of Haverford-west, passing under the gaze of its ancient keep and racketing up the first of seventeen slopes whose existence in the sixteen miles between the town and St. David's has become proverbial. An hour later the road dashed down a breakneck hill into the midst of an unexpected twilight village lying beside a narrow sharply curving arm of the sea. A black lugger lay moored only a stone's throw away.

"Well, for crying out loud!" was Tom's tribute. "This is something like!" He knew many flaunted seacoast hamlets of Devon and Cornwall that could not compare with this deep-set, trim and tidy, venerable place, complete with black ship riding at anchor in the estuary.

Several passengers were for Solva, and when the bus came to a standstill, much crowding took place in the gangway. Tom gathered his typewriter to his bosom and sidled toward the front.

His eye fell on Norshire, who during the trip had been sitting in one of the foremost seats, almost immediately beside the glass room reserved for the driver. Most of the time, as observed from behind, he had appeared sunk in thought or drowsiness, but now he roused, and turning round, met Tom's sarcastic gaze.

It had not been lethargy; his eyes were too live and comprehensive to permit that they had been dulled with stupor a moment before. He glared at Tom's faintly amused countenance for a dark moment, next, as if he had but then realized that Solva might be his goal, he glanced outside in a show of uncertainty and made wildly for the door, gaining it just as the bus moved on its way.

While the vehicle strained up the tall shoulder of the hill above the estuary, Tom saw on the bank, above the fishing shelters of rounded stone, a human figure, large and strongly made, with hands thrust in pockets and head sunk between

shoulders, plodding doggedly along the cinder-path: Norshire advancing toward the sea.

In his dejected yet determined carriage, his slouching yet swinging gait, was the same hint of obstinacy and alarm which had been in his desperate eyes and crazy speech.

This was the memory of yesterday that Tom had kept sealed for nearly four and twenty hours.

Now, here was the maudlin one again, tidier to be sure, almost sleeked, self-curbed, and exceedingly wary. He might be a year or two over forty, or a year or two under, but he looked older by a decade. While he stood irresolute for some moments in the doorway, there also advanced into the sick-room an extremely slight young man who hardly rose above the other's shoulder. His lank black hair falling to his cheek-bones seemed at odds with his very white, narrow face, which looked out eager with slightly protruding clear grey eyes. His straight, sharp nose, firm lips, and jutting chin all proved him true Veryan.

"Evelyn!" came an exclamation from Sir Anthony, while this seemingly bloodless mannikin darted across the room, fell on his knees beside the couch, and grasped the sufferer's hand. It was a question which was more pale, the old face lined with cares, or the young face whose smooth skin had the pallor of wax without, somehow, its suggestion of lifelessness.

Ideas were trampling madly on each other in Tom's head. "Holy snakes! Evelyn Arnott! That name reminds me of—where have I run into that name before? Some magazine the folks take? Or where?"

Then, just as the kneeling man commenced to speak, the truth smote Tom a staggering blow. "Great day! He's the poet! His works were for sale at Paddington yesterday, along with Harold Hardicanute and Winnie the Pooh. What a thrill!"

"Anthony! How can I express my happiness that you have

survived this devilish attack? They tell me that your strength is coming back to you with increasing speed. Is it so? You know that you have my utmost wishes and prayers."

"Thanks, Evelyn; I'm mending as fast as my doctor will let me," answered the wounded man, and Clegyrn, who was watching the two, twisted away with a snort.

"And how does Lionel fare? I must see him and cheer him if I can," declared Arnott.

"Lionel is dead; I wonder that you did not hear of it," said Sir Anthony succinctly, while in the little gasp of silence the poet looked at the others standing dumb.

A shadow passed over Arnott's intensely pale face, dimmed the lustre of his gleaming eyes. "He has succumbed? I am too late, then? I had hoped—"

"You must not reproach yourself. We are glad you came at all, my friend."

"Indeed, I am late in coming," Arnott protested in self-reproof. "Will you forgive me? For two entire days in Avebury I was absorbed in a fugal ode on the Temple there. I kept my mind sterile of all elements not germane. Imagine my shock, Anthony, my utter horror, when I discovered this ghastly news. Anthony, Anthony, I beg you to permit me to remain here as long as this horrible destiny plagues you and yours."

While he ended his plea, Arnott's eyes lifted for the first time from the wounded man's, met Arthura's in a look that spelled understanding and gave a new colour to his words. Perhaps Sir Anthony read that single glance.

"You have made a great sacrifice, Evelyn," he said. "I know how vitally you are bound up in your work, and what it means to interrupt that work. I—I should say *we*—thank you for coming. And of course you may remain, though some might say you are seeking out danger. Perhaps you will be sorry you had not gone back to your Temple and your ode."

"Never! How can you imagine—"

"We expected you to come," interposed the sufferer, "and you are here. But I cannot say we expected the gentleman who has accompanied you, and who seems much interested in us. His name I do not know."

He gazed at the other newcomer, who since entering the room had stood indecisive but obviously restless. Several times he had almost interrupted the bedside scene. Having resigned himself to wait until it was concluded, he contented himself by looking hard and long at each person in turn. With the exception of Clegyrn, who combined bovine impassivity with bulldog obstinacy, nearly all had dropped their glance before his black, drilling stare.

Meeting the level, politely humorous eyes of Tom, the stranger's eyes flamed in consternation, and for a moment it seemed in the balance whether he would cut and run or stand his ground. But the panic passed; with one deep breath and a toss of the head, the man settled himself and his face became a grim mask of brass, as if he had determined that whatever he was there for he would achieve.

"I met this gentleman—" commenced Arnott tentatively, but the other insisted on having his innings at last.

He pushed forward, and his voice, intended to be courteous, even mollifying, held a slight huskiness. "He'd never laid eyes on me, sir, before I shouted to the launch to put back for me. As you said, Sir Anthony, I'm not expected, and I didn't fancy I'd be welcomed. I've come as best I could."

"We are unable to receive all who would honour us with their addresses. Who are you, sir? Not one of those impertinent scribblers, by any chance?"

Affronted innocence and titillated incredulity were at odds on the stranger's expressive face. "Never dream of such a thing," he cried, advancing to where Evelyn Arnott had knelt, and most of those in the room felt in his manner the imminence of a

shock. Clegyrn was a brief study of indecision, whether to intervene or let the play go on.

Sir Anthony himself seemed to realize a crisis approaching; he drew himself up, as it were, in the bed. "Well, sir?"

"I bear no starry name," declared the other, pointing to Arnott with a glance of the eye. "But your brother Roger had a son, sir."

"God!" The particle of amazement broke from Bransonby's lips. For the rest, silence, until after a long moment the wounded man muttered, "I never heard of it."

"Why should you have?" said the stranger, and somehow he was able to make his tone both light and grim. "He was never proud of me."

"But we understand that Roger never married," pursued Sir Anthony. "A peculiar fellow, Roger, to change his name and live like another Stylite in a tower, and never to marry."

"It's no bastard blood I boast," shot back the other. "I was his one rare and legitimate child." He darted a hand beneath his coat, clutched papers stained by old grime and fastened together with black tape. "Roger Veryan *did* marry, you see. He wasn't always on Caldy Island, was he? There was that six-month he dropped out of sight for a stretch and finally turned up in Northumberland. That was when he changed his name, and by God, that's why I'm here! Charles Norshire, begotten and born in Northumberland, by damn! And there's my proof." The documents fell beside Sir Anthony's hand.

The announcement of the man calling himself Norshire was like a subtle poison in the air, paralyzing the tongues of all who heard. The silence seemed to increase. Only two persons had spoken, and they had left off without finishing. Arthura had regarded the stranger since first he had broken into words; at the sound of his voice a puzzled glimmer (Tom thought) came in her eyes, as if, perhaps, she were struggling to place him in her

memory. "Why, I remember. Weren't you—" she commenced, under her breath, not so loud that the gentleman down at the heels might hear her.

Robert Veryan, too, had a peculiar interest. Standing where he had clear view of the purplish face, he murmured absently over and over again to himself, "He is the last, the last," and twitched his beard with his left hand—that beard which had been plucked more on one side than on the other, so that the left side was markedly thinner and made the pallid skin show through.

Thoughtfully, Sir Anthony brushed the edges of the paper with his finger-tips. "Yes, Hawkwell, you are right." The solicitor had moved toward the bed. "Take them and test them. If, indeed, Mr. Norshire is not, may I say, deceiving himself, there must be no time lost in making him one of our family in actuality."

Hawkwell picked up the bundle with an inquiring look at the claimant, who nodded curtly. The solicitor adjusted his pince-nez and thumbed the documents without untying them, but glancing at the title of each, lifting his brows. "Ah, yes. I think that in two or three days—but complete verification may take some time." He cocked an eye at Norshire again, and spoke, for him, crisply. "You are aware, sir, of the exact relationship you stand in if these documents bear the test?"

"Don't I, by thunder! Anthony, Vernon, Roger, and Sally: I've had 'em drilled into me ever since I was a pup."

"May I be excused, then? I have urgent business awaiting me in the City. No, no, thank you, Arthura; I really mustn't stay for luncheon. Sir Anthony, I think I understand your wishes in that other matter."

("He ought to be a bee, and gather honey," thought Tom.)

"There may be a further change," said the wounded man, "but you will know of that before I do."

"Ah, yes, yes. I take your meaning. I shall acquaint you with the result of my inquiries. Good day, everyone. Good day, good

day." With a parting nod and smile for each, the solicitor trotted out.

Sir Anthony spoke: "You do fully realize, Mr. Norshire, that after Arthura here, who is the granddaughter of my brother Vernon, you will be my next heir?"

("That is so; that is so," came the submerged voice of Robert Veryan. Even in its secrecy it betrayed a note of relief, perhaps a gloating quality.)

"Have no fear, Uncle Anthony," responded Norshire with a large, self-satisfied grin. "I know what's to my own advantage."

"And why, Mr. Norshire," cut in Hector Bransonby's slightly mocking voice, "have you chosen today to make this pleasant revelation?"

Norshire swung toward him. "It's all very well to jeer. What better time is there than when you have troubles enough to drive you mad and there's no way out except Ramsey Island or the bone-pile? For fifteen years I've lived at the best on the lap of society and at the worst in the gutter, where there's sound sleeping, but I'd never have come here until I'd made my fortune, except for the Thing that's tormented me and made my life a hell. What kind of a chance did I have when my own father never told me who I was until he lay on his death-bed on wretched Caldy Island? 'I'm a Veryan and you're a Veryan,' says he, 'but remember your name is Norshire and try to forget the Veryans. They are bad, mad people,' says he, 'and its ill being mixed up in their affairs. They have only one good thing, money, and I think you have the wit, my boy, to make enough of your own to get along without any of theirs.' He was wrong, as it happened, although I've stuck to the death-bed exhortation and kept myself unknown all these years."

"That would be like Roger," said Sir Anthony. "As a family we are peculiarly sane, and he was the only cracked one. No offence, Mr. Norshire. To live in a tower, never to marry—I beg your pardon, sir; I forgot: he did marry, you tell us. At all

events, it must have been a strange mating. But does this fully explain your descending upon us so happily now, when our house mourns another victim?"

Norshire's eye brightened with a sort of triumphant despair. "Aren't all we Veryans under a ban? Norshire I might call myself, but I was still a Veryan. I've never felt it so much as I have lately. The trouble's been pricking and prodding me for two months, and I'm sick to death of it all. Someone—I've never seen but his shadow—has been following me day and night wherever I went. I've had threats and warnings that seem to mean nothing but must mean something. Don't ask me how I know, because I can't tell; but I've felt the Thing coming closer and closer. What could I do? I was one man against this hellish Thing, and I saw no other hope but to come to the castle and claim my place and protection. I won't—"

He ceased abruptly when the man Powell entered the room again, approaching Bransonby with his most melancholy expression. "The—they have arrived, sir," he said, and the rest became whispered colloquy, after which Hector called "Robert," and the three men went out, leaving besides the wounded man and his physician and James Mottram (who drowsed in an armchair), only Arthura and Tom and the two who had made their appearance less than an hour before.

Norshire's brow seemed invaded by dark thoughts. "God! how I've wanted to get away from it all—to be able to forget it all."

From outside and seemingly far away the faint clang of a bell was audible.

"You have forgotten something already," said Sir Anthony. "This island was indeed chosen as a refuge; it seems rather to have become a place of peril. There tolls the bell for our unhappy Lionel, who was attacked with me. They are taking his body to the old chapel on the farm. The danger is not always outside, sir. What do you say to that?"

Norshire's mood had changed to careless bravado. "You shan't scare me now," he chuckled harshly. "I'm on Ramsey Island now, and the Thing's outside for the present, and it'll have to come inside to get me. By God, Uncle Anthony, now I'm here, I'd chance the devil himself!"

"UNEQUIVOCALLY and absolutely the strangest story I've ever heard or hope to hear": that is how Tom described the history of the Veryans which he accumulated during the afternoon, a piece here, a fragment there, a link elsewhere, each and every member of the family contributing a part, but chiefly Sir Anthony (in the intervals of Clegyrn's ire).

The old man summed it as "one vast paradox."

Norshire stirred. "What's the paradox?"

"That our greatest troubles have come when the cause of them was at an end."

As for the history itself, the American felt he could do no more than wonder at its intricacy, never solve it. In the rough, there seemed to have been two principal Veryan branches, one mostly called Anthony, one rejoicing equally in the designation Patrick. Many of them had queer nicknames, like Shakespeare and The Shah and The Snail, and had made it their business to tread on each other's toes.

Sir Anthony himself had his counterpart among the Patricks. They had been at school together, rivals in Classics, though Patrick hated them, but would not give in. Then Maverick had called young Anthony away to travel with him in distant lands, and poverty had called young Patrick to the crumbling estate of his fathers in the North of England.

And from his tumbledown mansion, converted into a laboratory, he had launched against Anthony mad accusations. When Maverick died on an Argentine plateau, Patrick swore roundly that Anthony had robbed him of a fortune promised by Maverick. When Anthony was in the North, engaged with a Commission on Hadrian's Wall, the home of Patrick was razed by fire,

and the half-crazed scientist declared that Anthony had burned his house down and put an end to his precious experiments on the legs of living sheep.

This Patrick then came to Pembrokeshire, too, and haunted Anthony for more than a year, loitering about the coast, devising encounters everywhere, bowing and smirking at the Cathedral door, perched at the edge of excavations, hovering about St. David's, a figure of reproach. But he gained nothing by his intrusions.

Then slow starvation drove Patrick off, into the army as a surgeon, but not quite to oblivion. There were to be two more meetings. After some tragedy of love had ruined, so it seemed, Anthony's life, he had fled across the world, driven, knowing only that he intended never to return. Then he had met Patrick drifting into degradation in the southern seas, and bad blood awoke to life. They had fought; Patrick was marked with a great transverse scar on the cheek.

Years later Sir Anthony was near Cape Horn, seeking the Argentinian village where Maverick had died in 1882. One morning he looked up from his bed to see the broken face of Patrick in the doorway. In that small encampment, for it was no more, it was impossible for the men to keep out of each other's way. Fate forestalled their anger, for during this intolerable time an epidemic broke out, and in the midst of prostration and death it was discovered that there was only enough serum left to save ten men. The Veryans were among those who cut the cards for it; Sir Anthony was a winner; Patrick Veryan lost.

Severing a vein in the dead man's wrist, as the deceased had wished, Anthony shipped his rival back to Carlisle, where he was accorded, for his early brilliance in vivisection, a tomb in the Cathedral.

But even with this troublesome minion out of the way the succeeding time was full of peril and despair for the Anthony-

branch. Quite ten years later, in 1919, Sir Anthony's nephew—Whipper Snapper Anthony—and his wife met their deaths in a mysterious dog-cart accident in Wiltshire. Then Arthura came to live with Sir Anthony, who had returned to his castle and to his work on the Evidences. In October, 1920, Mottram's father, an enthusiastic and clever amateur photographer, was drowned off St. David's Head taking photographs of the waves breaking against the cliffs—a mad project. In the following year Standish Nicholson's father, of the same name, was discovered dead at the base of the Sussex cliffs, and Colonel Dalroy Crabtree was apparently trampled to death in the paddock by his favorite horse. Young Lacey Arnott, the poet's brother, was the victim of a mysterious crime of violence in Liverpool, and as his pockets had been rifled when his body was found, a plausible motive for the attack was apparent. But there were those who shook their heads, as again they shook them when, after the sudden death of Robert Veryan's father, the coroner was obliged to bring in a verdict of "Natural Causes."

These tragedies had their climax in 1923 when Sir Anthony himself, visiting Mottram near Salisbury, had driven away an intruder armed with a knife, but only after the weapon had played havoc with the victim's face. Therefore Mottram, Standish Nicholson, Lionel Crabtree, and Robert Veryan (born with the surname Gribble) had sought a kind of refuge in the castle, and Sir Anthony had summoned Hector Bransonby, then an humble police constable, rapidly earning promotion.

Henceforth James Mottram had guarded Sir Anthony in his own room or in the next while he slept, and had accompanied him when he left the castle on any journey whatever. He always went armed. "In selfless devotion," murmured Sir Anthony, his gaze roving across the faces of those who listened, "I do not think he could be matched by the trustiest watchdog that ever lived."

It was startling at this point to see a stranger standing on

the threshold of the sick-room. Yet he was not wholly a stranger, for the American remembered this slight ashen-hued person as yet another who had traveled down with him on the South Wales Express the day before. They had sat at opposite tables in the dining car, and Tom had noticed that between his square-toed boots the other was guarding a black attaché case. The man was below medium height, dark-dressed in a suit probably bought ready-to-wear, with a small pointed moustache several shades deeper than his brown eyes, and an expression not remarkable for good will.

He had come with soft tread, and now he paused under the lintel, studying the group carefully, almost warily, with an expression of surprise and faint displeasure on his pinched grey face.

"Come in, Frost, come in," invited Sir Anthony. "Here is Mr. Stapleton, whom you missed last evening—Mr. Norshire, too—and Mr. Arnott."

The detective had advanced a couple of short steps into the chamber, with low-lidded looks at the men to his left and right. The American felt the keenness of those darting glances. "Yes," said Frost, "I knew that I should find Mr. Stapleton here." He answered Tom's smile with straight bloodless lips that looked brittle enough to break if they were unbent. His voice was brisk and metallic, far from propitiatory: "These other gentlemen, now." He gazed hard at Norshire while he spoke.

Bransonby, with some airiness, commenced to explain the positions and purposes of the two.

Frost cut him short with "Don't trouble, Bransonby. Hawkwell and I met at Porth 'Stinian, and he told me of these visitors of yours. What I am wondering is—" Then, apparently changing his intention, he turned to the poet, saying, "Indeed I've heard of Mr. Arnott." His question shot out. "You did not come here after the Nicholson business, I believe?"

"Most unfortunately I could not." A fixity of expression

dominated Arnott's cold, white face with grey flints for eyes. "I was in Styria all that year, Mr. Frost."

The detective nodded slowly. "Quite so. And this is Mr. Norshire."

The gentleman down at the heels could avoid Frost's eye no longer. In opposition to the detective's frankly appraising scrutiny, Norshire adopted a bold yet uncertain defensive glare.

Sir Anthony sought to conciliate the uncompromising little man. "Mr. Norshire has submitted his proofs of identity to me, and Hawkwell is looking into them. Perhaps he told you that, too."

"He did," said Frost, and his lips closed, while his jaw twitched. "I think, *think,* mind, that I have met Mr. Norshire somewhere . . . at some time."

Norshire gave an uneasy laugh, but his eyes were still defiant. "Don't try to disguise your unpleasant remarks, Mr. Detective. No doubt you've seen me in quod. I've been in a good few gaols, I'll admit."

"No," said Frost, sucking in his cheeks, still thoughtful, with his eyes still intent, "it wasn't in quod. But somewhere, at some time, I am sure we have met."

"If that's so, you have the advantage of me. At all events," remarked the gentleman down at the heels with a condescension which wavered between the sublime and the ridiculous, "I'm glad to meet you here, Mr. Detective. I've been having a devilish life since winter and I expect you to hold my enemies at bay."

Clegyrn had been missing for an unusually long time, but now his re-entry with fire in his eyes was a sign for the end of the gathering. The old doctor had certainly partaken of that which inspires courage in the soul. In two minutes Sir Anthony's bedroom was empty.

Tom was moving out with the rest through Mottram's unsymmetrical chamber. Someone big was beside him, speaking. Who was it? Norshire. Oh, Norshire.

"What did you think of it?"

"Of what?" asked Tom.

"Of everything. Rum, I call it. That was Sir Anthony's point of view we heard. I'd like to know what tale Patrick would have told. I wonder what he thinks of it all in his stone box up there in Carlisle. I've seen it."

"You don't say."

"Plenty of times. His life's written all over it."

"His life?"

"His claims to fame, y'know. He'd have been knighted himself if he'd drawn the ten of spades down there in Argentine. It's a long hocus-pocus, like one of those Georgian biographies on a monument. I've had half of it by heart for years. Family interest, y'know. 'Pioneer Experimentalist in the Physiology of the Capillaries, Co-discoverer with Graham Browne of the Effects of the Absence of the Blood-washing Process.' It goes on like that. Heavy stuff. Great man in that box."

"Um-m. Yeah." Tom's grunts lacked family interest.

Norshire seemed bent on making talk. "Great man! I should say he was. Listen, let me—"

"Now, Mr. Norshire, before we go down to luncheon, I'd like a few words with you in private." That was Frost's voice coming to the rescue.

Norshire, obviously reluctant, was drawn away.

The American passed into the short transverse corridor, with the determination to perform an act he had often thought of in the brief interval since he had arrived. Pausing outside the black door, he, too, tried the knob softly, and finding no response, pressed, first with his elbow against his side, then with the whole weight of his shoulder against the door. It did not budge.

"Haven't you seen the padlocks inside?" asked an amused voice, and to his confusion Tom found Bransonby grinning behind him.

"Yes; sure I did, but I thought—thought that maybe—"

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"Have no fears," declared Bransonby. "That door has been unused this many a moon. I'll swear to it. Why, Frost has had it open and operated on it; he found beetles making their home in the lock."

AT dinner, Tom, divided between watching Arthura in admiration and Veryan in curiosity, mused:

"Gee, she looks A-1 in everything! That blue and brown scheme this morning, the grey she wore this afternoon—but in red! Princess is no word for it. I suppose she'll have to change to black—what's the matter with Veryan, anyhow? Seems to have lost his co-ordination. He almost dropped that glass. This morning you'd have thought he was—say! I'll bet he gets this way every evening. Shades of night! That's it, all right!"

While they rose from the board, Bransonby entered for his meal, it having been his turn to sit with Sir Anthony while Mottram dined. In the bustle of his arrival and the breaking up of the party, Veryan slipped away unobserved by Tom.

The others adjourned to the gallery. By what the American considered a happy chance, Arthura evaded Arnott's protective proximity and talked to Tom in a sequestered place beyond the fireless hearth. Soon, as he had known her to do more than once, she was telling wonders of Sir Anthony.

"I want him to get back to the Evidences as quickly as he can. It will make him so happy to get it finished. But as the days pass I'm afraid he won't."

"But he's coming along splendidly in spite of talking himself half to death."

"Yes, but it's—I hate to say it—it's his interest and his *knowledge* that I'm afraid for. Why, Tom, do you know, he once had the book almost by heart as far as he had gone!"

"Gosh!"

"That was last winter. During a rough crossing he lost both

copies of a whole chapter in the sound. It was about the gaer near St. David's. The typist had finished it, and Sir Anthony had destroyed the original after it had been checked. But, do you know, he dictated it all to me from memory again, references and all, and he only made one more trip to the gaer, to verify some dimensions. But he had lost his hold on the subject a little before you came, and now—oh, I'm so afraid he won't get it back again. I'm going to make him work hard—"

Arnott, who had been dipping into a book from one of the poetry cases, a thin pretence, leaned over the back of Arthura's chair.

"They are asking for you, Arthura. Have you forgotten that you promised us Debussy tonight?"

"Goodbye, Tom. I hope you like Debussy, and Johann Strauss!"

Tom composed himself. He noticed that Frost again sat among the household, but while the detective closed his eyes and rested his head in the corner of his chair his face never relaxed to the spell of the Gardens in the Rain, not even to the gay dancing From the Vienna Woods; it never lost the look of strain, of the torsion of thought.

Tom felt the shock of reality when she closed the keyboard cover and declared herself *so* sleepy and anxious to retire. Though it was then only a little after nine, the others, too, except the American, declared for bed.

Now Tom sat alone, surrounded by clumps of furniture and the forest of books, listening to the drone of the wind above the castle.

Beside him on a sturdy tripod glowed one of the two great oil lamps with orange shades that had illuminated the gallery. While his mind gradually disengaged itself from its environment and fell to pondering on the hundred and one bits of fact and phases of character involved in the Veryan problems, the lamp gradually went low.

"Better put it out of its misery," thought Tom. He reached up, extinguished the light, and sank back in his chair.

In the darkness his mind worked more vigorously.

For a quarter of an hour of darkness there was absolute silence within the gallery itself. Suddenly, from a youth slouching in an upholstered chair and letting his thoughts run away with him, Tom became an extremely alert young man, bolt upright on the edge of the cushion, trying to collect wits as slippery as mercury.

He had heard a sound and the sound had not come from the right place. Somewhere close *above* him inside the gallery there had been a faint click and a soft sigh of air.

That was it! The gallery of books above the cork-screw stair. A whisper of stealthy movement now issued from the upper darkness. It was curious, now that Tom thought of it, that before this soft-footed progress there had been a swish suggesting the opening of a door. But that was nonsense. Beyond the wall there was nothing but the atmosphere of the Jericho Terrace, and Kestrel's Eyrie had no blind doorway pierced in its façade. The unknown had simply been up there the whole time Arthura was playing. Now he crept toward the cork-screw stair. Where bound? And upon what bad business?

A dart of light shot through the gloom when the unknown reached the head of the stair. The beam fell on the triangular steps, and down those steps flapped a pair of legs in baggy black trousers that had a possibly familiar look. The large knobbed hand that seemed trebly sinister in the faint diffused glow above the torch was one that Tom had possibly grasped.

The legs reached the floor. Then Tom spread his arms wide and closed them, garnering whatever was above the legs in his huge embrace.

"Got you," he clucked grimly, and fastened upon the wrist of the hand that held the torch, turning the light upward into the unknown's face.

"Ugh!" His repugnance was so great that he almost let his captive drop, and if he had the man would certainly have fallen to the floor.

"Great golly! Veryan!"

Before that flash of recognition, Robert Veryan had given a piping yelp of terror and collapsed, so that Tom held a body wagging and doubling like a rubber bag partly filled with water. Unaided the man could not stand; the American supported him to the nearest armchair, deposited him, struck matches, and lit the piano lamp, which probably contained more oil than the one he had extinguished.

Veryan lay crumpled, his mouth still twisted into a grin of terror, but while the gallery became bright, he stared with bewilderment and a great relief at the tall figure standing over him, arms akimbo. The man's heavy breathings became quieter, and between gasps he managed to speak.

"Was that you—or did you rescue me?"

"My unworthy self that was—alone." Tom hastened to add penitently, "I'm gosh-darn sorry I gave you such a shock. I was sitting in the dark, not smoking or anything, after the others turned in. You gave me a couple of minutes of heart-failure, I can tell you, coming along up there, the last place I expected anyone to be. Are you—all right?"

"Better, thank you. Quite well."

"Can't I get you some water—or something?"

"Thank you, no. I am quite recovered." Veryan was now able to sit up and reveal his smiling tooth. "I am sorry I gave you any anxiety. You should know that I spend most of my evenings up there, Mr. Stapleton, tonight longer than usual, as I had become so engrossed in my work as not to notice that Arthura's music was over for the evening and everyone gone. I—I am sometimes a little nervous in darkness; so I made my way as quietly as possible—"

Tom's mind fidgeted. He looked at Veryan with a fallen jaw and an uncertain lowering of the brows.

"I don't wonder at your incredulity, now I think of it. An unlikely demesne, isn't it, up there? But may I show you? You will find my retreat interesting, I believe, and your doubts of my sanity, perhaps, will be removed."

"I apologize, really. I didn't mean—"

"Indeed I do not censure you in the least." Veryan rose to his feet with some effort. The face behind the beard was less blanched now. "Come along, Mr. Stapleton, do. It will take no time, and I shall be aggrieved if you do not visit my sanctum."

The man turned toward the alcove of the cork-screw stair, and Tom followed, not of his own volition indeed, but from the lack of it. He felt a dull misgiving while inertia succumbed to Veryan's call. What could there be up there among the shelves? Why did Veryan want to show it to him?

The upper gallery ran both left and right from the landing. Veryan switched on his light and cast it on the carpeted floor, leading Tom a little distance toward Arthura's Tower. Books hemmed them in until, to Tom's astonishment, they reached a small baize door at the end of the gallery.

"Pardon if I enter first." Veryan pushed open the door, which had no lock, and cast the torch-light inside. Tom had an instant's glimpse of a small cubicle, scarcely more than a widening of the passage, wherein were a narrow desk and a chair and many books and documents. The torch was extinguished, but Veryan at once struck a match, and a strengthening glow spread from a small lamp set in a circular rest fastened to the wall. "Come in," invited Veryan; "that is, if you can manage," and Tom was just able to do so, stooping under the lintel and shaping himself somewhat like a note of interrogation when inside. In this ungraceful bend he turned his head to one side and the other, marvelling at the fullness and compactness of the array of books and papers that

crowded the walls a little beyond his nose in each direction. Tilting up his chin, he saw the ventilation for this compartment was from a shuttered grating in the roof, which must admit sufficient air for Veryan's needs, but could hardly yield any light.

"His lamp drinks up the oxygen for him," thought the American with a side-glance at the pasty, bearded face. "A slave of the lamp, all right."

Veryan's tooth was prominent. "My little artificial Elysium, Mr. Stapleton. Here, if the present is gloomy and the future ominous, I can escape into the past."

"You've packed scads of stuff into this little cubby-hole, all right. I should think there was enough material here for a couple of men to work on for a lifetime."

Veryan extended his large hands. "One burrows, Mr. Stapleton; one is never satisfied. I am constantly acquiring new treasures. Only the other day, indeed, I was grievously disappointed over my failure to purchase a valuable book in London. I endeavoured to obtain a first edition of Bloss's 'Manual of Heraldry,' but when all arrangements had been made, it proved that the edition was spurious."

"Too bad." Tom scanned such titles as came within his compass. "I don't quite gather what your subject is. Would it be history?"

"Of sorts, of sorts. But like most of my kin, Mr. Stapleton, I am a fatalist, and one of the consequences of fatalism is ancestor-worship. I have made genealogy my hobby. The volumes and pamphlets and fugitive leaves you see here contain, I suppose, all that industry can ferret out or that money can secure, bearing, however remotely or trivially, upon our family record. I have here the only copy of the Veryaniana of—"

"Genealogy!" exclaimed Tom. At that moment his mind had flown back to the minute after Norshire had entered Sir Anthony's room. "There's something you said this morning I wanted to ask you about, if it's O. K."

"Certainly," murmured Veryan, all politeness. "Have no hesitation."

"I'll risk it, but you'll think I'm pretty nosey. Well, when the poet and the other arrival came on the scene this morning, I noticed you were taken with some idea, and you said—loud enough for anyone to hear who was listening—that he was the last, meaning Norshire. Was there any special significance in that, that just an ordinary American wouldn't get?" Then he concluded hurriedly, "Perhaps-I-shouldn't-ask."

"Legitimate, quite legitimate—the question, I mean," responded Veryan. "I meant merely that Mr. Norshire, provided he makes good his claim, as no doubt he will, completes the roll of descendants of Horace Veryan. Now that we learn that Roger had issue, there is no possible vacancy to be filled, so to speak. And Mr. Norshire will inherit," concluded the bearded man, bringing in this somewhat irrelevant fact with a certain relish.

"Inherit next, you mean? That *was* what they said, wasn't it?"

"Arthura is closer in blood. Yet in a sense which is neither legal nor moral, but partly both, she is not the heir. Her grandfather Vernon, Sir Anthony's brother, quarrelled with Maverick and renounced his inheritance, and was cut off altogether. None the less, Sir Anthony is leaving her a handsome legacy, and of course she has some means from Whipper Snapper Anthony's estate, and more from her mother's. Oh, she will not be left in penury."

Tom listened with lively interest, but he was waiting with his next question, seizing what seemed a glorious opportunity to unravel a complex tangle.

"Then Norshire is the next heir? Who's next after him?"

"Through the unhappy deaths of Standish and Lionel, I am."

"You mean you were the heir before Norshire arrived?"

"Quite so. And after me, Mr. Stapleton, is Hector, and finally James. To carry it farther than James would embarrass me, really, for the title to the property would probably go overseas, to one of your American connection. But here, now—" The bearded man made a sudden dive and grab in the direction of a cramped press atop a cabinet almost overwhelmed with bundles and sheaves of paper. "Here is a trifling compilation of mine which will make the situation leap to the eye. Verbal explanation on the subject of pedigrees is liable to be clumsy and futile. This simple chart shows you our relationships at a glance."

He had withdrawn from the press a broad white sheet, beautifully scrolled, on which was engraved what seemed to the American an exceedingly difficult system of branching lines and series of names.

"Why, it's a tree!"

"Yes, a trifle I prepared for relaxation. Will you do me the honour of accepting this copy with my compliments? I shall be—"

"Well, now, that's very kind of you. But it's too much, really."

"Not at all, not at all. I shall be only too delighted. I prepared this little table as a present for my friends. It contains one or two features of general interest, so I pride myself. Certainly you shall have a copy. But pardon me; I must add an item or two, as the chart is not quite up to date."

Veryan wormed his way into the small chair which of necessity stood close to his desk. The broad sheet lay before him, with the legend running above: TABLE OF DESCENDANTS OF HORACE VERYAN OF CONISTON PARK, WESTMORLAND. The genealogist drew a brilliantly-feathered pen from the jet inkwell. Tom, looking over his almost childish shoulder, saw his great hand like a crustacean wobbling across the paper, making queer marks at the foot of the Table. A thrill ran down his spine and circulated through him when he deciphered those marks.

MAVERICK VERYAN AND HIS DESCENDANTS

PORTION OF CHART PRESENTED TO TOM STAPLETON BY ROBERT VERYAN

MAVERICK m THEA DAVIES
1828–1882
In Antarctic Expeditions, 1866 and 1877
Died in Terra del Fuego

ANTHONY
1853–
Knighted
1887

VERNON m GLENNA MAITLAND
1854–1898
Emigrated to Australia, waiving inheritance.

"Whipper Snapper" ANTHONY m GRACE DYMCHURCH
1880–1919
Killed with wife in accident near Old Sarum.

ARTHURA
1908–

ROGER
1856–1911
Took surname Norshire.
Lived in tower on Caldy Island.
Suicide?

SUSAN m JOHN PILKER
of London
1860–1895
no issue

m STANDISH NICHOLSON

STANDISH N. m MARY DAVIES
1885–1921
Found dead at foot of Beachy Head

STANDISH NICHOLSON
1906–(1925)

NOTE

Before the arrival of Charles Norshire at Kestrel's Eyrie, the heirs of Sir Anthony, as far as known, in order of proximity, were:

Arthura Veryan (inheritance barred by Vernon Veryan's renunciation)
Standish Nicholson (until his death, 1925)
Lionel Crabtree (until his death, 1927)
Robert Veryan (born Gribble)
Hector Bransonby
James Mottram
? American branch?
? Descendants of line of Patrick Veryan, "The Snail" (1740–1807), probably extinct?

The name of Standish Nicholson had ended the branch of Susan Veryan. The year of his birth was indicated, 1906, but the Table had been made before his death, for Robert Veryan now printed in scrawling capitals below the name:

"MURDERED MAY 27, 1925"

Likewise for Crabtree, born in 1899, he wrote:

"MURDERED JUNE 2, 1927"

These laborious appendages completed, Veryan looked up with a smile. "Should I not add—I should, undoubtedly."

He bent his shoulders again, and when his business with the pen was done, Tom saw underneath the place of Sir Anthony's youngest brother, Roger, the name of Charles Norshire set down as Roger's issue, with the comment:

"CLAIMS TO BE SON OF ABOVE"

Veryan dried the several increments with a roller. "There you are, sir. A few minutes' study of this screed should enable you to recite us pat in order. I hope the subject has not wearied you."

"Absolutely the contrary. Thanks a lot for this. I'll profit by it, surely."

His admission condemned him to a lecture illustrating the chart. When, after a quarter of an hour, they left the den, it was not because Robert Veryan had exhausted his information or his energy in dilating on "Anthony, Vernon, Roger, and Sally." But in the midst of the genealogist's third enthusiastic partition of his subject, both men had suddenly stiffened and looked a question into each other's eyes. Veryan's face relaxed quickly, even while the faint tinkle sounded.

"Ringing!" Tom whispered. "Somebody's ringing!"

Veryan chuckled. "No cause for alarm. What we hear is the telephone."

"Of course! What a simp I am."

"But I can't imagine who can be calling! I wonder if it is for Inspector Frost. We must go down and see. No one in the bedrooms can hear that bell."

Veryan blew out his lamp, and his flash again showed where feet might march. Tom, with his Table under his arm, followed down the cork-screw stairs. The piano lamp was now nearly out, and Tom gave it sudden death, too; the beam from Veryan's hand found the telephone still sending forth its jingle beneath its silken repository in St. David's Tower.

"I'll hold the torch if you like."

But Veryan declined. "Thank you. But will you be kind enough to answer it for me? I am a little nervous of telephones."

"Certainly." Tom disengaged the receiver. "Hello."

"Oh, are you there?" answered a microscopic voice. "Is that you, Hector?"

"Stapleton speaking."

"Who—what did you say? Is that Kestrel's Eyrie?"

("Who is it? Who is it?" asked Veryan impatiently.)

"It is, and I'm Tom Stapleton. I'm the Amer—"

"Stapleton, did you say? Yes, I get it now. I'm sorry, but I couldn't recognize your voice, could I? This is Hawkwell, at St. David's." Even over the 'phone the solicitor's voice dripped myrrh and honey.

("What did he say?")

"Oh, yes, Mr. Hawkwell. What can I do for you?"

("Hawkwell! Humph!")

"I have a message for Sir Anthony. Is there no one else in the gallery at present?"

"Only Mr. Robert Veryan, who asked me to answer the 'phone. Do you want him to carry on?"

"Oh dear, no. It's quite all right, Mr. Stapleton. I didn't wish to inconvenience you; that is all. Will you take this mes-

sage for Sir Anthony, then, to be given him first thing when he awakes in the morning?"

"Fire away, Mr. Hawkwell."

"First may I ask if Mr. Norshire is staying in the castle tonight?"

"Yes, sir. They were speaking of it at dinner. He's to have Standish Nicholson's old room."

"Thank you; I was wondering. Will you tell Sir Anthony, then—how is he, by the way?"

"He tired himself out talking this morning, but I believe he's all right otherwise."

"Irrepressible Anthony. Will you tell him that from a preliminary test Mr. Norshire's credentials are apparently sound? Thank you. I have had telegrams from Kendal and Keswick tonight, and a Charles Norshire is known there. It may be that a reply from Somerset House will quite establish his claim. I have also got in touch with Keble and Chantry, and they are investigating—but I forgot, you wouldn't know, of course. Those gentlemen are Sir Anthony's London solicitors. That is all, I think. Thank you exceedingly, Mr. Stapleton."

"Don't mention it, sir," said Tom, and he hung up the receiver, his brain full of flying perplexities. Here was Hawkwell getting Norshire established, while Frost—well, Norshire had looked very much embarrassed in Frost's presence all the afternoon whenever Tom had seen them encounter each other on the terraces or in the castle.

Veryan listened to the message and made no comment except an interjection on the inscrutable ways of Providence—"Providence some call it; I think a better name is Fate. If Mr. Norshire proves actually to be Roger's son, though I should not think that we can be certain until after long and exhaustive inquiries, why, the situation here returns to the

status of 1925, before the strange, sad death of Standish Nicholson. Instead of devolving to me, who after all am a distant cousin, the wealth remains with a descendant of Maverick."

Tonight, while Tom waited for twelve o'clock and sleepiness, he studied the ins and outs and roundabouts of the lines that had sprung from Horace Veryan of Coniston Park. But his mind drifted from the design to the designer, Robert Veryan. His thoughts, however, lacked continuity. Veryan, himself the richest of the heirs, was Sir Anthony's heir. He had been, anyhow, until Norshire came. He didn't show any feeling about Norshire butting in. That meeting in the dark! Tom himself had been excited enough, but Veryan had almost fainted (again!) unless Tom was no judge. Did he expect to be murdered for his money, or just on general principles? Tom had hardly believed a man could look so far gone with fright.

Though he lay awake, Tom did not hear Bransonby's soft re-entry after his secret trip across the Sound.

He awoke, the message for Sir Anthony uppermost in his mind. Without venturing forth to obtain the bath he had promised himself early last evening, he climbed into his clothes. This time he found no hot-water can reposing in the corridor, nor had his boots been attended to, facts which caused him to look at his watch again. It was a quarter to nine, and the Powells, he had been told, invariably reached the island at eight or a little before. Odd, no water.

Another oddity struck him. Veryan's footgear was still unpolished before his door, but Norshire had not left his out, dusty and battered as it had been.

"What a man!" murmured the American.

Rapping at the entrance of Mottram's room, he received a sleepy response. Calling out his name and errand, Tom waited while Mottram took what seemed a preposterously long time to get into a panoplied dressing-robe and come blinking to the door.

Tom explained himself fully.

"I don't know if he's awake yet, but I'll go and see," offered Mottram, fisting a yawn.

"Thanks," said Tom. "Here, where—"

He paused in amazement, just inside the trapezoidal chamber. He had made a discovery.

There were two doors from Mottram's room besides the portal in the passage. A green curtain, now drawn back, had concealed this unexpected second one when Tom had passed through to Sir Anthony's chamber yesterday.

Where on earth could it lead? What besides sea breezes could be beyond that wall?

The door in question was only a step or two away. Tom had it open in a moment, and was standing in the narrow passage beyond, which, a bare yard wide but some twenty-five feet long, extended across the cut-off corner of the castle at the south-east. Both walls were of finished masonry, and in the outer one large, mullioned windows afforded a long view beyond the waters of the sound and the extremity of the mainland, down to distant islands. At the far end of the passage another door appeared in the inner wall; most likely it opened into Sir Anthony's room.

So this well-illuminated passage was made to lead from Mottram's room into Sir Anthony's, by a roundabout way!

Then in a dart of inspiration Tom thought he saw the secret of the turned knob, and why Mottram had found no one in the corridor when he rushed out with the poker. Leaving Robert Veryan's fainting out of it as a problem in itself, wasn't it obvious that between the time when the two men stared at the turning knob and the time when Mottram found the corridor empty, the intruder had slipped through the two doors into this seemingly pointless passage!

How had he escaped afterwards? Tom looked down from one of the mullioned windows. No good there. The castle wall and the cliff wall were apparently continuous, and the water was a sheer hundred feet below.

So far Tom had come in his reasoning when Mottram's head appeared around the doorpost. "Found this place, did you? Sir Anthony's just awakened."

Tom reached out a plaintive hand. "What *is* this place? I don't understand it."

Mottram's cut lips attempted a smile. "It's called Candle at Both Ends. Not much use, is it?"

"I'll say the name fits it. Has it always been like this?"

"Some stairs must have come up here once from the billiard room."

"So now it's only a place to take in the view, a look-out station?"

"Yes, that's right, a look-out station."

"And does that door there lead to Sir Anthony's room?"

"Yes; it opens into his wardrobe. Are you coming to see him?"

"Right you are. This is no time for speculation."

"Mr. Mottram, sir," sounded a voice from the trapezoidal room.

"Another visitor."

"That's Powell," said Mottram. "What can he be wanting?"

Powell was standing on the threshold of the inner passage. His face was in its most melancholy phase, but a feverish brightness shone in his eyes.

"Mr. Mottram and Mr. Stapleton, sirs. Mr. Bransonby told me to call you downstairs to tell you that Mr. Norshire has been—found."

Both men looked intently at Powell; Tom loosened his tongue first. "Found how? I didn't know he was missing." Then a great excitement almost made him lose his balance, and he cried, "Do you mean something's happened to him?"

"Yes, is that what you mean?" echoed Mottram, catching fire.

Powell hesitated, looking distressed, and Mottram flogged him with a voice grown suddenly shrill. "Speak up! Don't let it choke you, man. What's happened? Is it—what we think?"

Still the major-domo did not say a word, but with his eyes turned toward the floor, nodded.

"That's what it is, then," declared Mottram. "Norshire has been murdered."

Tom never remembered how he reached the head of the stairs above the statues, how he scrambled down, with Mottram at his side.

"Beastly superstition that of Powell's," said Mottram querulously.

"What do you mean?"

"He won't speak of these murders. Never mentions them. He thinks it's unlucky to talk of them, keeps the 'curse' with us. Much good his silence has been."

It explained, anyhow, why Arnott and Norshire had penetrated the castle to Sir Anthony's room yesterday without learning of Crabtree's death.

Turning to the right at the stair-foot, they hastened past Perseus and Aphrodite, parted the curtains (deep blue, not black, as he had supposed two nights ago), and entered the museum in the tower. It looked the same as usual with its glass-fronted lacquer cases containing buckles and bracelets and pouncet-boxes, besides enamels and porcelains showing a hundred tints, sharp and soft, and the one tall cabinet of Roman pottery, Samos ware, and mediæval weapons.

Mottram, who was pervaded by an intrepid eagerness that Tom did not share, sped on into the antechamber. Tom paused to gather his fleeting courage, before he entered the little room which had been the scene of two murders. He heard a small, sad voice say, "Oh, Hector, don't ask me, please. I can't remember. Don't you believe me?"

Arthura and Bransonby were in the distant recess of the tower, she with her hands pressed to her brow, he watching her, half-stern, half-pitiful.

"I can't remember, honestly and truly I can't," she said, taking her hands away and looking up at the blonde man-mountain appealingly. "I only said I might have done. The more I try to think—"

Waiting to hear no more and sorry to have heard so much, Tom followed Mottram.

It was not a pleasant thing he found, or a pleasant half-hour which followed. On the floor beside the window with the starred

pane lay a shape beneath a curtain. Evelyn Arnott, who was already there with Mottram, lifted the corner, lifted it so that half the body was revealed. In death Norshire was so writhen that he seemed to be actually struggling for life. There had been no blade this time, but strangling hands. The black, contorted face and bloated, lolling tongue were so much more hideous than anything Tom had expected that his reaction was a pious cry uttered with the sharp intake of the breath:

"God A'mighty!"

In the midst of his loathing a spur of compassion pricked him. So Norshire, from a mire of dissipation and dread, had come to this. This! No matter what the man had been, he could not have deserved this, to be squeezed to death in the clutch of some assailant endued with the gusto and strength of the devil.

"I'll dare the devil himself!" But the devil had been too powerful for the gentleman down at the heels.

A red, round-faced constable, unshaven, who had slept in one of the servants' rooms inside the castle, was keeping jealous guard, waiting, he explained, for the Inspector.

"What! Frost isn't here?"

"No," said Bransonby, who had entered the antechamber, more or less filling it. "He'll be in a huff about this murder happening in his absence, but he's only himself to blame."

"What's become of him?"

"After dinner last night he decided to go into the City again. I took him later, after we made the rounds to make everything secure."

Soon a group of six (for Robert Veryan entered presently) were gathered in the hall hung with lofty arras. There they sat through a haggard three-quarters of an hour. A hasty breakfast, nervously revealed by Mrs. Powell, tempted only Bransonby and Mottram.

There was no relief in talking, for no one knew anything

to tell. No one had been disturbed in the night. The Powells had entered the castle at the usual time and had gone through the gun room to the kitchen, where Mrs. Powell had lit the coal fire which had been laid the evening before. (That meant hot water in twenty minutes.) Powell had knocked up the constable, who had spent the night in one of the three cubicles once used as servants' bedrooms; thereafter the servant had gone the rounds to open the windows and air the rooms. In the antechamber he had stumbled over Norshire. That was the beginning and the end of it.

A sickly silence, punctuated by attempts at conversation that intensified the vanity of speech, settled in the Hall.

"I say, did you notice Norshire's feet?"

"His shoes, you mean?"

"One was missing."

"One shoe, you mean?"

"Of course."

"I didn't; no."

"One shoe was missing."

"I noticed that, too," said Tom. "Anybody spot it?"

No answer; the clock struck ten. The shadow cast by the rosewood screens had dwindled to less than the length of the screens themselves.

"Hector, weren't you going to have that window in the antechamber repaired?"

"I was, yes."

"Well, why not?"

"The glazier in the City's on holiday. I may have Powell patch it up if the police don't object."

Interval. Veryan gnawed his lip as well as tweaked his beard.

"You told Sir Anthony, Robert?"

"Yes, I informed him. He wants to see Frost the moment he arrives."

"I'm not surprised."

Mottram muttered, "Why does the detective go off—"

"Oh, you can't blame him. He couldn't have—"

"Couldn't he?" Mottram took up the gauntlet. "What's he here for, I'd like to—"

"He is a detective, not a bodyguard," said Robert Veryan.

"You throw that in my face, I suppose?"

"Oh, why, why pursue a senseless quarrel?" asked Arnott. He had been sitting near Arthura, but this was his first speech since the breakfast had been removed.

"Listen, folks," exclaimed Tom. "Someone at the door."

"I'll go, shall I?" said Bransonby.

He disappeared into the Refectory and they heard his mammoth progress through the study to the entrance hall.

Five minutes passed, and he did not return. Time crawled on. There were sounds of movement from the antechamber where the body lay.

Ten minutes had gone by. In the doorway from the Refectory a crimson constable was standing. He spoke in the monotone of the well-regulated automaton.

"If you please, Miss Veryan, Miss, Inspector Frost is asking for you. In the curio room, this way, if you please, Miss. The others to remain here for the present."

"He's going to subpoena us in turn," thought Tom. "Bransonby and Powell have been through theirs."

Soon he himself parted the blue-black curtains for the second time that morning, rapped on the panel.

"Come in, please."

One glance at Inspector Frost sitting behind the small table removed from the antechamber revealed that Norshire's death had been for him not only an overwhelming surprise but also a blow to his pride. He was shrivelled into himself. He seemed like an organism, touchy, wary, on guard against an enemy it could not define. For just a moment while he entered, Tom saw

Frost's face taut and wan; then the detective assumed an official woodenness of expression and became brisk.

"Thank you for coming in, Mr. Stapleton. Take a chair, won't you? This is a terrible surprise for us all. A terrible crime—sort of thing that mustn't happen again. We *can't* let it happen again."

To this decidedly insipid formula Tom assented, with eyes busy before him. The small table between him and the detective had been swept clear of its hats and odds-and-ends, and other objects now lay upon one half of it, covered with a large white handkerchief.

"Like a magician's rig," thought the American. "Well, what's the first trick going to be?"

Then, for his eyes had been roving about the room, he gave a chortling cry and pointed at the top shelf of the principal cabinet, which contained a few choice porcelains. There, between two of the largest and most minutely carved specimens of Samian ware, reposed the missing shoe of Charles Norshire, heavy rubber sole and heel showing yesterday's dirt through the glass shelf, the uppers torn and dusty as they had been when he arrived at Kestrel's Eyrie.

"Look, Mr. Frost, look! An addition to the museum!"

Frost did not stir from his apathy. "Yes, Mr. Stapleton, I know. That's the missing shoe."

"But—say, I'll bet it wasn't there when I came through here an hour ago. Hector and Arth—Miss Veryan were here then. Didn't they—"

"Don't distress yourself, man. Let's leave the shoe out of it for the moment. I can account for its presence there, I assure you. Now, the reason I am asking the members of the household to come in is that I need all the evidence I can obtain on several vital points. Have you any information to volunteer?"

This perfectly mechanical preamble allowed Tom's gaze to wander again. The shapes of the things under the handkerchief

intrigued him, but the finding of the shoe set him exploring elsewhere for new discoveries. In a moment he gasped and goggled anew.

He pointed. "Look, Inspector, down there. Have you spotted that, too?"

But Frost seemed incapable of strong reaction. "You are very observant, are you not?"

"But isn't that Norshire's necktie?"

"It is, deftly wound about the leg of the show-case and fastened in a four-in-hand. No matter. I ask you again, have you any information to give us about last night's affair?"

"How could I have?" returned Tom, with growing incredulity. "I slept right through the night."

"A good sleeper, Mr. Stapleton?"

"One of the best. (What," he pondered, "*are* those things under the handkerchief? One is square, one has a sharp point at the top, one looks like a sphere, unless I'm—)"

"What a pity. You might have heard something otherwise."

("For crying out loud," thought the American. "Is this the way a great mind from Scotland Yard gets down to work on a crime? Not in the hundred and one authorities I've read.")

Frost drummed on the table with his finger-tips, his lips framing some dim utterance, his eyes moving vacantly. "I wonder if you find it warm in here," he said abruptly, whisking the handkerchief to his brow.

Tom looked at the array which had been underneath, and only by a great effort of control, remembering how Frost had received his previous flights, did he prevent another exclamation. His gasp of natural amazement was chastened to a long toneless whistle.

He was staring at a small stoppered ink-bottle, an octavo volume bound in purple with "Sonnets of the Passion" in yellow lettering on the cover, a spool of brown cord, a virgin

cake of pink soap, a fragment of green chalk, a red billiard ball, and a chunk of coal. These, no doubt, were the clues that necessarily accompanied a crime, though usually not in such profusion. If they were clues, Tom hoped Frost was satisfied. There were enough of them to choke a horse.

The American's inspection flitted from the soap, resting between the ball and the spool, and reached the "Sonnets of the Passion" by way of the coal. Coal! Soap! Cord! And all the rest. Lifting his gaze, Tom saw Frost's eyes very thoughtful, studying him, and suddenly he felt uncomfortable and abashed.

"What do you think of them?"

Tom chose to be flippant. "Not a bad colour scheme. But the soap and the sonnets don't match. This would be better." He reached out and slid the billiard ball, the chalk, and the soap into new positions. Frost let him do so.

"Now you get both harmony and contrast. But no fooling, Inspector, what do they mean?"

"What indeed?" asked Frost, and the tone of the two words conveyed, for him, a great atmosphere of sense.

"I mean, where do they come from?"

"You can't tell me? Are you prepared to affirm you don't know? Are you prepared to swear it?"

"I'll swear it by anything you like."

Frost's attitude changed from aloofness and authority to a friendly intimacy. He leaned across the table, picking up the billiard ball as he spoke. "This, for instance, Mr. Stapleton: how'd you like to carry it about with you if you took a notion to prowl through the castle at night? Would you pick it up, make it the nucleus of a little miscellany?"

Tom scratched his head. "I don't get you, Inspector. Hopeless imbecile, I am. Make it easier."

"What's your opinion of a man who collected these items and stuck them in his pockets during a midnight prowl?"

"You don't want to tell me—"

"You see the contents of Mr. Norshire's pockets."

"Well, for moaning out loud! You tell me, Inspector; why did he collect them?"

"You go too fast, Mr. Stapleton. I didn't say he collected them."

"You didn't? Why you just asked—"

"Quite; I asked you what you thought of someone who would collect them. That's different, is it not?"

"Then he didn't collect them?"

"I don't know."

Tom leaned back wearily. "I told you I was an imbecile. Can't you make it a little easier, Inspector?"

"Why, yes. Naturally, it seems difficult because you can't see the cards I hold. Now, take the billiard ball I've just shown you. I've picked it up and grasped it in my hand. It's hardly possible for me to do so without leaving—"

"Finger-prints! Then there weren't—"

"Just so. There were none on the ball when I found it in Norshire's trouser pocket. There were no finger-prints on this little glass bottle; there were no impressions on the soap, or on anything else. Now, consider Norshire for a moment. Think what a change came over him between dinner and midnight, how delicately he transferred the ball from the rack into his pocket, how gingerly he touched the soap! He handled the bottle as if it was brittler than an eggshell. The coal might have been a hot coal. Perhaps he palmed these things, but I doubt—"

"Yes, you've put that idea across, Inspector. Even a feeb like me can see it now. But he might have used gloves. That's how they do it in the books."

"That's how it's done in life. We have found no gloves, however; so it seems that Norshire's assailant must have taken them. There's an obstacle to that, though; I have ascertained that Norshire had no gloves when he arrived."

Tom drew a long breath. "Sorry I made the suggestion. Hereafter no suggestions from me."

"It wasn't a bad one, Stapleton: on the contrary. But, as it happens, we don't need to inquire into the meaning of these objects, nor into the shoe and necktie there, which you said were not here when you came through the first time this morning."

"I thought not."

"Constable Lewis found them soon after the body was discovered. You'd never guess where, Stapleton."

"I won't try."

"The shoe was on the raised foot of that nude dancing statue, and the necktie was fastened around the lady's neck. The constable quite properly removed them before anyone came down, and I have placed them where I thought they might furnish me with a sort of index to the people I'm interviewing this morning."

Tom glared. "So that's it. What have you gained by that?"

"Negative results," answered Frost, unperturbed. "Negative results, but valuable. I have come to the conclusion that unless you are a much better actor than I give you credit for, you really know nothing about this crime."

Instead of cheering him, this pronouncement gave Tom a miserable, wobbly, sick feeling. "You mean—you really—suspected me?"

"Impartially. But you met the test of these objects very well."

"What test do you mean? I don't know anything about them."

"The real test was before I raised my handkerchief: your manner after you sat down. It was obvious, as you say, that you didn't know anything about them, and you were very, very curious to know what they were. *But you refrained from asking.* That settled it—but let me tell you," pursued Frost coolly, "if that self-denial was a conscious touch, you are an actor who has missed his vocation. Perhaps, too," mused the detective, "I am out of my depth in dealing with one of your

nation. You Americans aren't of a piece in showing or concealing your feelings, and that sometimes puzzles one a bit. In this country we might consider such a display of excitement as pure bluff."

"Well, I'll be ossified!"

Frost replaced the handkerchief above the miscellany. "I think that will be all, Stapleton. You tell me you've nothing to impart. But before you go, let me ask you as man to man, what do you think of this crime? Never mind evidence; that's my business. Haven't you some impressions? *They* go a long way sometimes, you know."

Could this be the Scotland Yard manner? Thinking hard, Tom took stock of the man across the table, but it seemed impossible that there should be guile beneath that matter-of-fact tone, behind those even eyes.

"Your impressions, Mr. Stapleton."

"All right, I'll bite. But the only impression I've got is based on evidence. Norshire was a big husk like me—I mean a big, hefty fellow, lots stronger than me, maybe—and here he is strangled! The minute I saw him there, I thought it must have taken a donkey-engine to tie him in a knot like that. It must have been someone awfully, tremendously strong."

Frost concluded a short fingered tattoo, his brows lined, his mouth framing silences. Was it possible he would reject this simple statement, so obvious that Tom had felt ashamed to make it?

"Um-m-m. I'm not so sure."

"Why, it stands to reason—"

"Oh, yes, it stands to reason, you say. But before you begin to reason you must have all the facts. If you can't have all, at least don't leave out any you may have."

"Well, if the man who strangled Norshire wasn't strong, what was he?"

Frost deliberated, "He was clever, one of the cleverest I've ever been up against."

"Yes, sure, certainly. But what a strange, peculiar—do you mean to say—"

"One example more, if you don't understand," said Frost tolerantly. Tom could have punched him for his condescension. "What are we to think of the shoe?"

The American cocked an eye at the uncleaned shoe on the glass shelf. "I suppose you wonder why the murderer took it off?"

"Not that one," said Frost with a flicker of impatience. "It's obvious who took that off. The other one is the teaser."

"The other—on his foot?"

"Yes. The real problem is who put the other one on."

"The other one, on his foot? Why, Norshire did, of course."

"Oh, no," said Frost, shaking his head gravely. "I fancy not. But there it is, Stapleton, something to think about."

Tom rose from his chair, aware that that speech meant dismissal.

"But to be sure," Frost remarked, "our preconceived opinions will neither help nor hurt us. We'll have our man this time, as sure as fate."

Tom heeled about at the door. "You mean you have got a clue?"

"We have *the* clue."

Tom came back a step. "Wha-a-t!"

"The gentleman who throttled Norshire was careful to leave no traces about on the furniture, or on these trophies. But the marks of his fingers on Norshire's neck are very plain, even plain enough on that greasy skin for prints to be taken of one or two in the condition of rigor mortis."

The top of Tom's head seemed to fly off, but he didn't care. "They are! Great stuff! Frost, more power to you! I hope you

collar the dog today. By the living jingo, I can't tell you—can't—"

The detective regarded Tom calmly, looking up into his eyes. "Thank you, Stapleton. Should I applaud? It's a nice point, isn't it? But what am I to do? Suspend judgment, I think."

"Appl—suspend—what do you mean?"

"Are you, after all, the best actor on this island—not Ramsey, but Britain? Well, good morning. Please don't communicate with the others in the Hall of Curtains until after I have seen them. Lewis, ask Mr. Robert Veryan to come this way."

THE American strode to the Monkey Terrace through the open gate, and there commenced to walk innumerable miles up and down the dull glades of evergreens. His mind was higgledy-piggledy with the stratagems of Frost, the riddle of the multi-coloured collection, the necktie, the shoe, the other shoe, and the general incomprehensibility of the crime. More than once recurred to him that brief portion of a scene witnessed and overheard between Hector and Arthura in the museum. The untoward discovery of the Candle at Both Ends now seemed like some ancient, far-off event.

Amidst his tug and moil of thought it was the pleasantest relief imaginable to find Arthura herself tripping down to the terrace to call him from his brooding. His face fell, nevertheless, when she told him that he was once more summoned to meet Frost.

"I like this sun and I like these jaded green trees. Do we have to go in?"

"But, Tom, imagine! He's going to tell us all about it! He's going to make a statement, and Uncle Anthony wants us all to hear it."

"You don't mean—he's not going to name the man!"

"Oh, Tom, you look so comical when you're surprised. But I shouldn't say such things. I *am* sorry for Mr. Norshire. I didn't like him yesterday, but I might have liked him quite well if he had stayed with us."

Marvelling without comment at such charity, Tom shortened his stride a little, and the castle received them within its dark jaws. There was no one among the statues or in the corridors upstairs. While they went past the black door, they heard a voice inside already proceeding in a quick low monotone.

A subtle effluvium of fascination was in the air. Frost, on whose knee lay a sheet of paper filled with jottings, sat at the bedside, reciting quietly, but his voice could be made out in every part of the spacious room. Arthura and Tom dropped onto the wicker couch behind Mottram and Bransonby, and caught the current of the detective's narrative.

". . . solely why I regret that I did not remain here last night. On considering the situation after dinner, however, I decided that I must reinterrogate a person in St. David's at once. Mr. Bransonby took me to Porth 'Stinian, and I walked to the City. I left Constable Lewis here, and as far as I can see, he is not in any way responsible for the occurrence.

"A little after nine this morning Mr. Bransonby got through to me on the 'phone. He had difficulty in doing so, as I had already left Mr. Hawkwell's, where I slept the night. Bransonby reported that the body of Mr. Norshire had been discovered by your servant Powell in the course of his early morning duties. I hurried back here as soon as a motor and a launch could bring me.

"The state of affairs was very curious. Humanly speaking, there is no doubt the man was strangled. I am not a medical expert, but I think most doctors will agree with me when I say that Norshire probably met his death somewhere between midnight and two o'clock in the morning. That is to say, considering the temperature and the mode of death and the present state of the body, I must suppose that this attack took place at the same time as the earlier ones we know of, during the darkest period of the night. But there, I believe, the resemblance between this and them begins and ends.

"I found no sign of a furious struggle in the cloakroom—antechamber, I believe you call it—which leads me to suspect that Norshire was surprised and overpowered before he could

exert much of his strength. The body is distorted, but the indications are that Norshire was rendered helpless at once. Instead of signs of struggle, we have some evidence of a queer turn of mind on the part of the murderer, indications that may or may not require a good deal of thought and study before we can decide what they mean."

The Inspector turned a page of his notes, cleared his throat. "To begin with, before my arrival Constable Lewis observed that one of the pieces of statuary in the entrance hall, the figure of a dancing girl, had received an addition to its wardrobe. Yes, Sir Anthony, no wonder you are surprised, but the others know of it already. One of Norshire's shoes had been removed and slipped on the extended foot, and Norshire's necktie had been tied round the neck. Quite properly Lewis removed these articles before anyone else, as far as he knew, had noticed their presence, and he took the precaution of making a small lead-pencil mark on the statue, as, not being an expert in art, he was not sure he would remember which one it was.

"Now, this was strange enough, Sir Anthony, but I found another feature to match it. It appeared—I am not prepared to go further than to put it in those words—but it appeared that in his progress through the rooms on the ground floor, before he was attacked and killed, Norshire had picked up one thing in this room and another in that, until he had stuffed his pockets with six or seven objects whose significance, taken separately or together, I am not able to venture an opinion upon."

The detective ceased speaking. Sir Anthony looked at him inquiringly, but said nothing. Presently, having taken several long breaths, Frost resumed, reading off the items from the paper on his knee.

"A red ball and a piece of chalk from the billiard room, a new piece of soap from the servants' lavatory—the constable

saw it there last evening but didn't use it—a parcel of twine from the drawer of the kitchen table, a bit of coal from the scuttle, a book of poems from the window-shelf in the Refectory, and the inkbottle from the writing desk in the study. That's the list of things we found in Norshire's pockets.

"No, if you please, Sir Anthony, one more matter and then I'll have done with this section of my report, the least important section. The statement I am about to make will surprise some of you, since I made a contrary one in private a little while ago.

"There is at present no clue to the identity of the criminal. He left no marks behind; none, gentlemen. I hope you will pardon my lack of candidness in the museum."

"Foxy Frost," muttered Tom. "So that was a bluff, too."

"The murder was committed by means of the necktie. In some manner Norshire's assailant was able to unfasten this and, according to the impressions, wind it twice around Norshire's neck. By knotting it tightly the murderer then accomplished his purpose in spite of all the victim's struggles.

"That, in brief, gentlemen and Miss Arthura, is the description of the crime. Now, I think that the circumstances of the affair suggest something that you should know. I am unable to say who killed Norshire. The means and method of this crime are radically different from the means and method of three nights ago and of two years ago, and there is one rule of thumb that the police find very seldom fails. It's almost an axiom of our trade. If we find two murders committed in different ways, we assume two murderers. It's as true of murder as it is certainly true of other crimes, like burglary. I am as sure as I am sitting here that last night it was a different man who waited for his victim in the antechamber."

Bransonby tossed his head, "Impossible!" There was a pronounced stir among the others there. Only Arthura, whose long slim fingers were resting on Sir Anthony's wrinkled hand,

evinced no feeling. Her face had a childlike gravity, her brown eyes neither skeptical nor perturbed.

The wounded man spoke. "I wonder, Frost. Isn't it quite enough to believe that *one* person has got into this place successfully and escaped successfully? To allow that there were two multiplies the chances beyond what I call the limit of possibility."

"True, sir; it's straining credulity. But, knowing who Norshire was, how can you believe he was killed by the same intruder?"

"Knowing who he was?" exclaimed the man in the bed, his eyes lighting. He even raised himself a little on a tottery elbow. "You know who he was?"

"There's no doubt of that, Sir Anthony. I have known all along."

"You have?"

"Who was he?" bellowed Bransonby, and Robert Veryan repeated in a tone more intense, "Who was he, for God's sake?"

Only Tom whispered under his breath, "Foxy Frost."

"I'll tell you. Last night Mr. Hawkwell received messages from Westmorland that seemed to justify him in 'phoning here and leaving word that Norshire was likely to be Norshire after all; that is, that he was Roger Veryan's son. Unfortunately he spoke to Mr. Stapleton over the wire a few minutes before I arrived, or I could have prevented him. Norshire was Norshire right enough, but he was no kith or kin of yours."

"He was not?" cried Sir Anthony, his excitement rising in spite of Arthura's watchful warning. "Not Roger's son, did you say, Frost?"

"Not his legitimate son, perhaps you mean," said Robert Veryan.

"Never fear," replied Frost. "Roger Veryan had no concern with wives, I'm sure, and I'm equally sure that he didn't take an interest in ladies of any complexion. A queer sort of

man, as I've heard you say half a dozen times if once, Sir Anthony. Norshire chose a poor branch of your tree to hang on to."

"He was a liar and an impostor?" The wounded man's words were a monument of scorn.

"He was."

"The fool!" cried Sir Anthony, his eyes flashing fire, "the poor blundering fool! Go on, Frost. You have more to tell, surely."

"I can tell you all about this man Norshire, except how he came to die. If I had been on hand yesterday when he arrived, I might have warned you and saved him. But not being here, and finding that you had taken him in on sufferance, I thought I might let him remain here overnight and make his excuses to depart today. For though he was, if I may use the term, a wild man, he was a harmless wild man, and I wanted to make no scene here if possible. I believed then, as I believe now, that your persistent enemy will show his hand as long as he believes the family, and only the family, are here. I have considered doing away with my own presence and that of the constable, or at least I have considered appearing to do so. Certainly it would not be advisable to have Norshire here, especially—"

"Yes, yes, very well, Frost," said Sir Anthony with a little impatience. "There's no need to apologize for your actions. You had your reasons, no doubt. But who was he?"

"Charles Norshire was the ne'er-do-well of an obscure family in Westmorland, sir. He had knocked—or been knocked—about the world a good deal, and in Australia he had run across your father, Miss Arthura, and became a crony of his, or perhaps I'd better say a hanger-on. You must have heard of this man Norshire long ago and have forgotten it; I'm sure that it was through acquaintance with his family that Roger Veryan came to prefer Norshire to his own name. So you can

see that he had some connection with the Veryans and a ready-made branch of the family tree to graft himself into."

"But what could he have gained by that?" objected Bransonby. "His brass and his confounded papers wouldn't have fooled us more than two or three days, and then—"

"Two or three days were all he wanted," returned Frost. "His whole story and pretence had the purpose of gaining him a temporary foothold here. He gambled on getting it, and in a way he won."

"What were his precious plans?"

"You have to realize the man's character to realize what I mean. I said he gambled; he was a real gambler through and through. All his life, as he said quite truly, he had been a darling of the gutter, but of late years he had been going from bad to worse. Whipper Snapper Anthony and a good many other friends of his were dead; he had lost the entrée to some places where he had once been tolerated. I think he had exhausted his last sources of revenue; that means sponging revenue. And when the news of the attack the other night came along, he risked the last fiver of his capital in one final gamble."

"Still I don't take you," said Sir Anthony.

"I'm preparing the ground," said Frost dryly, "but I'll make it brief. In his speckled career he had done a little of this and that. He had been a spy for an inquiry agent and he had done bits on the stage. Now he believed he saw a way to amalgamate his chances and retrieve his fortunes by one desperate stroke. He would come here and solve these mysteries, solve them in spite of you and me!"

"Phew! He found the lion's mouth, all right!"

"There were bigger risks in it than you may guess, though you know how his venture has turned out. He must have been aware that I had been a friend of Miss Veryan's father, and all

England and Wales knows that I am in charge of this case. He had even seen me, and I him, once or twice some years ago. There was a chance I should recognize him at once and deport him. He took that chance. There was every chance he would fail, as the police have failed up to now. He took that, too. See how he behaved on the Express coming down to Haverfordwest. (Yes, Mr. Stapleton, he told me all about it yesterday.) He acted in that reckless, apparently half-insane way, risking the very possible result that you would give him in custody. He was working himself into the part then, trying it on you. Imagine, trying it on you, a man in the one coach going to Haverfordwest! He met with a sharp check when he discovered to his dismay that you were bound for St. David's, too, and he spent the greater part of the night wandering along the coast after scrambling out of the bus at Solva. But in spite of this surprise he kept on, reckless and improvident to the last!

"He was a gambler, you see. According to his belief, the wilder the chance, the better he stood to win.

"And now, gentlemen, he is dead—which leaves us just where we were before."

"Yes," said Bransonby in one of his whale-like breathings, "just there."

The Enemy

Kestrel's Eyrie,
Friday the twenty-third.

Dear Family:

This may be a long, long letter, but as the big silence has been emanating from here ever since the day after Norshire died in such a funny way, don't kick. Who knows how much longer I can stay here? I'm beginning to feel as if I ought to hump it to London and get on the job. The Sunbeam City Dads are probably going to have conniptions when they learn how I've been spending the last two or three weeks.

Having fed you up with descriptions, I now come to a few happenings. They let me drive the second car from the castle garage at Porth 'Stinian. So am now monkeying with a four-cylinder, four passenger touring, four speeds forward, fourteen horsepower Bean. Don't laugh. Bean over here means an automobile. It is, I may tell you, a Jumping Bean in reverse.

And with this brave little gadget I have had almost an adventure. Only yesterday Sir Anthony—by the way, I meant to tell you how he is. Physically, in my opinion (you don't have to take it) he's absolutely all right. He says so himself. He did have one of the worst cases of shock on record, and a nasty bleeding gash in the thigh as well as a few other small punctures, but the shock, as shock usually is, was of short duration, and the gashes healed up quickly.

I've been talking with him a lot lately about his subject, and believe me, the Romans knew their plumbing. He wants to make one or two expeditions on the mainland, as his notes on Menevia (where the "Burrows" and the golf links are now) aren't what they should be, but this old-maid doctor with a scarlet past, Clegyrn, says he's too weak to risk the crossing (½ to 1 mile!) and the hiking over the dunes. This Welsh horse-doctor runs truer to form as a grouser than any I've met yet, and he's certainly hitting his stuff on high when he insists that Sir A. isn't fit to be about. Sir A. fumes

and probably calls Clegyrn a lot of things that aren't in the Boy Scout Manual, but he's following orders.

Arthura says that since these last murders Sir A. hasn't been able to pick up his life-work. I told you what splendid trim he had been in early this year, how he remembered whole chapters by heart. But he wasn't doing too well with the Evidences before the tragedies occurred, and now, just when he needs to be at his best, he's absolutely helpless. His notes have tailed off, and his memory of the reference books is getting poor. But Sir A. drives himself, for as Veryan (blackbeard) says, he doesn't know when the next blow will fall and perhaps knock him out.

I forgot I was supposed to be telling you about my near-adventure in the Bean. Yesterday a package for Robert Veryan was held up for postage at Haverfordwest Post Office, and somebody had to drive in for it.

Well, Powell had had a heavy day directing the cleaners who come over here every week, and some of his regular routine had been postponed until after dinner, so I volunteered to gallop into town to bring ("fetch") the package. The Half-west trip has no thrills in it for any of the others. I wanted Arthura to come along, but she was standing by Sir Anthony in an effort to assemble a chapter for the typist to play with up in London. (That's another of the queer results of having nobody but Veryans live on the Island.)

So I went along and collected the parcel at the Post Office, jumped the Bean backward a way, whipped her around, and set out on the return trip.

Boy! That trip back from Half-west! It gets you, what I mean. All the while you're looking at the barren hills north and west and seeing the water way ahead. Then the grey castle on a grey crag looms out of the fields on the right, and the road swoops down to the shore, and the waves boom against the barrier of stones that stands between them and the road, and when you've got back to the hill-tops again, the highway passes by old white-washed and pink-washed cottages with roofs of stone slabs—and then Solva comes—

Well, what I'm trying to say is that all this romantic stuff is just calculated to get me keyed up. After an hour's ride through this countryside, I'm jagged.

If it hadn't been for this trip, I don't think I'd have had the nerve to do what I did.

I was driving cautiously as the dickens through the complicated roads this side of the City when I overtook this Flemish woman walking by the wayside and carrying quite a heavy basket. I knew who she was the minute I laid eyes on her, even though I'd only seen her once before from a side view.

There was something upright and at the same time graceful about her that makes her different from the other peasant women hereabouts, even if she was dressed like one of them in a p in black skirt, a plain black shawl, and a man's cap with her yellow-grey hair sticking out from under it. (You don't see those picturesque Welsh costumes any more except on the picture post cards.)

I didn't have any idea how to speak to her, but I was stepping high and reckless, as I've tried to explain. I drew the Bean up alongside of her, and said something about how it was a hot day and maybe she'd like a lift with the basket.

You know, in spite of the effect it gave, this bygone passion stuff had raised the tiniest little snag of doubt in my mind all along, but when she looked up at me with those marvelous eyes, and what I believe is known as an unblemished brow I knew, that it was absolutely true. It struck me like a thunderbolt that with her in the same neighborhood a generation ago no man could have been easy in his mind. She and Sir A. must have made the world their oyster.

I got this electric effect in less time than it takes to click off boo on this machine. I went all hot and cold, as if I'd called a princess I didn't know by her first name in the street, instead of just a poor old woman who lives in a lonely cottage.

She seemed startled, too, but she looked from me to the car, and I know what was in her mind. Then she asked, "Are you the American who has come to Kestrel's Eyrie?" I said yes and she simply said, "Thank you for asking me, but I shall not ride with you."

That was all there was to the conversation because she turned away without giving me a chance to say anything else without shouting. When she'd gone I felt all washed out, as if I'd just passed the crisis of a spell of fever. The jag was gone and left me weak.

So I got the Bean into action. I would have liked to hear her talk some more because her voice isn't harsh and cracked but it's like her eyes, deep and rich. What a woman she must have been once!

And that was that. Down at Porth 'Stinian I met this lad Half-west moseying around. He's the only one of the reporter-boys left now, even after two murders in one week, and I guess he's finding the pickings awfully lean. Those Birmingham mysteries have stolen our thunder. I tried to cheer him up by telling him that Frost doesn't know any more than he does, but it will take another murder to console him.

Did I tell you about the inquests? According to the books on crime they play a big part, but there was nothing to these two. Bransonby told how he had found the bodies with Arthura, the Naval surgeon and Clegyrn pronounced that Crabtree was dead, and the coroner said something that nobody could hear about "police" and "this day three weeks." Norshire received much the same honors.

Between you and me, the Naval, retired, was what the boys called sozzled when I left home, but don't ask me what they're calling it now.

I told you about the funny-business that Frost pulled on me that morning in the museum. Well, since then he's been on hand off and on going to the mainland nearly every day but sleeping in Hector Bransonby's big room regularly at night. H. B. has moved into the one that was Crabtree's. Frost believes that the demonstrations are over, and Norshire getting rubbed out was the last.

He and I have been having two or three long talks, and I'm not sure he's quite made up his mind what to think of me. He's taken my finger-prints, but he's done the same for everyone else in Pembrokeshire, I think, and nobody has been arrested yet.

After lying in the chapel outside the walls for two days and having been examined thoroughly inside and out, Norshire was pronounced dead, due to strangulation. They've buried him somewhere in the north of England, where he was born. That "Northumberland, by damn!" of his will stay with me longer than anything else about him.

Arthura says—

"Good morning, Tom. You seem to be frightfully busy. All those pages. May I come in?"

The Rem. Port. fell to the carpet as Tom displaced it from his knees and scrambled to his feet.

"Darn! Good morning, Arthura. May you come in! It's your tower!"

"But you must give me a better reason than that."

"I'll cry if you go away."

"That's better. Tom, you're a funny person. Do pick up that typewriter. The poor machine!"

"Oh, it's used to it."

"I can't stay more than a minute. You don't know what it is to be the mistress of a large household."

"No, I don't."

"Well, I hope you may some day."

How he had come to listen for and delight in that gay, twinkling little laugh!

Arthura was sitting with her hands folded in her lap, her eyes taking in the long prospect. When she contemplated things, it seemed that she saw them afresh. He looked at her and thought of her indeed as a real princess breathing in a real tower. (The mind of American youth runs to princesses.)

"Are you going to be terribly busy today? Will you come to Aber Mawr with us this afternoon? We'll take our tea."

"When did I ever say I was busy?"

"I don't know, but you always manage to behave as if you are. Perhaps Americans find it easy to."

"Now I don't like you."

"Then I'll go. No, Tom, really I must. How can I do three hours' practising in two if I don't?"

"How do you keep it up? I have often wondered—doesn't it take it out of you to drum away at the keyboard the whole morning?"

"Sometimes it does. But what of that, Tom?"

"Gee whiz, then, why do you do it? Is it worth it? Why must you—"

"Mostly for Uncle Anthony, Tom. Don't you realize how he loves music? I think he's my best critic really. These long afternoons lately—why, if I let up for one day, don't you think he'd notice it? It means so much to him, and he hasn't very many things to cheer him up, you know. He works so hard, too. Now I *am* going, Tom."

"You know you like it better here than down there at the piano."

"Yes, I do, generally, when I'm alone."

Tom resolved upon a bold stroke. "But you weren't so happy when I saw you first."

Arthura was stilled by surprise. Her hands lifted and touched beneath her throat, and she looked at Tom a little breathlessly, her lips trembling. He would have liked her to look so always.

"But, Tom, the first time you saw me wasn't in my Tower."

He reached across the typewriter, which lay on the window-seat between them, and brushed her sleeve. "Yes, it was Arthura, I saw you from about here to your finger-tips. There was a handkerchief in your hand."

A blush swept over her face, up to her burning eyes. But she still looked straight at Tom, and his eyes fell before that firm gaze.

"So you saw me wave the handkerchief? I've wondered so often since that evening. I thought you wouldn't, really, or I suppose I wouldn't have done—what I did."

"You wouldn't have?" he asked, regretting his words at once, for his voice was unexpectedly and uncontrollably husky.

"Dear me, no."

He gathered his vocal chords together for another effort, but his words were still indistinct. "What *did* you do it for, then?"

"I couldn't sleep." She realized the incongruity of that answer, and her eyes, which had wandered to the horizon of waters far

in the north, met his again. He had his accustomed wriggle of perplexity on his brow.

"I was supposed to be resting because I was going to sit up the second half of the night with Lionel. But I was sleepless, and I knew that you were coming; so I came and watched from here. You're right; I wasn't very happy that night. I felt—oh, I felt desperate—trapped. I hated all this mystery, these deaths, and the misery they brought to people around me; and when I saw you and Hector come, I couldn't help thinking of other girls in other towers who had waved, long ago—I thought you might be a deliverer!" Then, after the silence that fell, she added, "I had been reading some silly book."

"Yes," he sighed, careful not to let her see how much that conclusion had dampened him, "there are some terribly silly books girls read."

She smiled at him again with that firm, disconcerting look. "I must learn not to give myself away so easily. The next step is that some girls are terribly silly, and weak."

Tom made gestures of denial and his voice was strong again. "Bad reasoning, that is. I suppose you'll tell me you don't know that I think you're about the bravest little woman of your size in the world?"

"I'm not brave, Tom, and you know it."

Tom looked as much like a note of exclamation as possible. "What! Living here!"

"I'm not, I'm not!" cried Arthura, suddenly serious. "I don't need to be brave to stay here. I'm selfish, really."

"Now how in the name of wonderful do you figure that out?" he asked, staring with all his might at her face, her anxious eyes, her pathetic, trembling mouth.

"It's not brave to stay here when you know that nothing will happen to you. I've never felt for a minute that anything could happen to *me* in the castle."

"What's behind that feeling, or can't you tell?"

"Why, I feel so safe and protected, as if there was a circle of safety around me everywhere I go. Everyone here—you make me say this, you know—wants to take care of me. Standish and Lionel and Hector and Uncle Anthony and all of them—they wouldn't let any harm come to me."

Tom did not answer immediately. A faint cloud was on his brow and he fingered the crease in his trousers dubiously. Several times he gave a tentative smile and shrug.

"Well," he said at last, "that's what I call bravery."

"Oh, Tom, you will be flattering, even to the point of a fib, I'm afraid. But how?"

He would not meet her eyes. "I don't want to upset you, you brave little thing, but there it is. All your people want to protect you, as you say, but they want to protect themselves, too. And only half the ones you mentioned have escaped. Don't you see what it means? Suppose Hector, or R. V., say, or Sir Anthony himself met with—trouble, you'd be the less protected, wouldn't you? Brave: what else can you call it to be waiting here while something keeps grinding your family down?"

"You don't frighten me a bit, Tom, and I won't think of anything happening to the others, now. Perhaps," she said with a mischievous twinkle, "I'm one of those nerveless people that are physically unscarable. Now, Hector is like that. You could frighten the gargoyle over the castle door easier than him."

"You need to lose your nerves, to live on this island. The hardest thing for me to understand, psychologically speaking, is why your Uncle Robert Veryan, for instance, manages to live here and get any sleep at all."

The Veryan line strengthened from chin to ear of Arthura's face. "It's because he is the bravest."

"Do you think so? Really?"

"Of course he is. He's all nerves. Did you ever see a man so frightened? He does his best not to show it, but anyone who's lived with him as long as I have knows that Uncle Robert's

terrified even in the daytime. He's made a hobby for himself and tries to forget his panic in it. But I know that sometimes he has to take things before he can sleep, and even that is brave, when he doesn't know what will happen to him before he wakes up."

("Dopes himself, eh? So that's what he did the night Crabtree and Sir Anthony were attacked!")

"I called Uncle Robert the bravest," Arthura went on quickly, "but perhaps I should say he's the only brave one. There's Uncle Anthony, of course, but he's seen so much of life that there's nothing new in the world to him, and I don't think he cares two pins about life or death. Except for the rest of us, he'd welcome danger. And Uncle James—well, he is so much bound up in protecting Uncle Anthony that I don't believe he ever thinks about himself one way or the other. In fact, he has never really forgiven Uncle Anthony for not waking him when Lionel came that night."

"But—don't you see, Arthura?—all this moral courage is just thrown away if things go on happening. Why, what's the use of keeping up your morale while you have a detective here that can't keep the mortality down? The way Norshire—"

Arthura shook her head vigorously. "You mustn't blame Inspector Frost, Tom. No, really, you mustn't. I think sometimes that this is too big a mystery for anyone ever to solve."

"Well, some people would say that as a detective he's a joke. Gosh, it's three weeks since—"

"No, Tom, don't say any more. I know that he's doing the best that anybody could do. We were talking about bravery. Why do you leave yourself out?"

He gave a short deprecating laugh. "Huh! I could be scared out of my shirt if I ever really thought I was *in* this mystery. But you know how it is."

"You haven't made it too awfully clear, Tom."

"Well-l, look over there now." He waved toward the north-

ern cairn, in the shelter of whose rocky slope stood the remnant of the one building on Ramsey Island besides the castle and its attendant farm. A bungalow, erected by some friend of Maverick's, soon abandoned and therafter deserted, it had suffered the ruin of weather for fifty years.

"The hill and the house: do you see what I mean?"

"Not quite yet, Tom."

"It's this way, sort of. That hill has been there for a long, long time, and it's sort of got background. By jiminy, it *is* background! The things that happen here belong to it and it belongs to the things that happen. That's what your family is like. Don't you get me? The history of these parts not only belongs to you, it *is* you. But me—" He shrugged his shoulders. "I'm that little, unwashed, unwanted, what-have-you, there, that doesn't even fit into the surroundings. Really, Arthura, that's the trouble with me. I haven't any roots, and it's too late to grow 'em. I'm just floating around without any hooks on anything. It would be worth it to get a real scare out of this, to feel that I was *with* you in this thing. I try hard to belong, but I'm just that unwashed modern thing without background. I'm nothing but—"

Arthura laughed. "Oh, Tom, I hope you don't really feel as much an outsider as all that." She rose to her feet with sudden decision. "No, don't get up. What shall I do? I've talked to you much longer than I intended. Dammerung will say that I have forgotten how to play, and you must get on with your writing."

"You've forgotten how to play better than he ever knew," said Tom, adjusting an ancient American formula to the occasion. "And a letter to the home folks can always wait, however brutal that sounds."

"Well, then, if my playing is so wonderful, perhaps it won't disturb your letter if I practice until luncheon?"

"YES, IT WILL!" roared Tom. "But listen, if you don't

disturb me I'll be off you for life! Away with you, woman! Avaunt!"

He had the Rem. Port. on his knees again before her laugh had died away.

THAT afternoon at Aber Mawr, Arthura, Robert Veryan, Mottram, Hector, and Tom roamed over the cliffs and finally picked their way down them by what Hector claimed was his secret path. The track led through tangles of stunted bush that seemed impenetrable and dropped from ledge to unexpected ledge, reaching the shore by a double-hairpin turn on an apparently unscalable escarpment.

Beneath the vast green cliffs split by titan sledges, a spirit-lamp boiled the water for tea. The four found adequate room to sit on one of the struck-off stones at the foot of those cliffs, stones of some gigantic masonry strewn like the ruins of a tower rivalling Babel. The waves broke into lacy white at the end of their long journey, and the rumbling undertone of the sea, now a grumbling groan and now a diminishing, hissing murmur, indeed a whisper, was never still. It served as the ground base for the voices of birds.

The air of the little bay was vivid with whirling, skimming, coasting wings, carrying their owners in circles outward and back to the rocks upon which they had settled; and the air was restless with their shrill cries. There were nests on every ledge and in every cranny, filled by the elders of the community sitting in solemn groups with their heads close between their shoulders. The elders alone were in evidence, no young having arrived. Now and then a seal nose stuck out of the water, or a seal coat writhed its sinuous length above the waves.

The sun was warm upon the gigantic, rough-cubic rock, and here at the water's edge the breeze, which was a gale where it rushed upon the cairn above, no more than played with Arthura's hair.

Only two of the family were not there. The poet's genius had burned all day, and he had reluctantly remained in Kestrel's Eyrie in order to strike off his rhymes while the hammer of mind was hot. Sir Anthony, tired from a morning's work on the Evidences, rested in his bedchamber where, at Mottram's insistence, a constable sat near the threshold.

Now Mottram basked. Under the persuasion of the weather, the scarred man was more human than he had been at any time previously in Tom's presence. Robert Veryan, too, was less strained and watchful than he had appeared for some time. He was pleased with himself, because a three-page monograph on which he had laboured for months was nearly finished, and the periodical in which he wished it published had indicated its willingness to give his work the dusty immortality he craved. Another midnight would guarantee the proper phrasing and punctuation, but first, this afternoon, the bearded man enjoyed the relaxation of the blithe air and the capering sea.

They did not return to the castle until dinner-time, when, in the Refectory, as usual, Inspector Frost joined them. He had not improved in sociability or in temper during the fortnight since Norshire's death, and the reason was to be found in the recent leaders in the papers commenting on the "breakdown" of the police—and in the little note he had received from his chief that morning, a note couched kindly but containing hints of steps which it might be necessary to take. . . .

Bransonby hailed the detective with his usual greeting: "Well, Inspector, and what progress? Interrogated more Citizens?"

"Yes," said Frost distinctly.

"Splendid," Bransonby encouraged. "By this time, Inspector, you must have cross-examined the whole population. Are you going through the lot a second time?"

Frost turned away speechless.

Tom stole to Arthura's tower after dinner, grimly conscience-

smitten about his letter. There was still light enough in that high room to let him write for half an hour.

I visited the Museum of the Saints the other day. The prelate remembered me all right, too, and he was full of the wonders of St. David's. He told me all about the relics that were there, and also the relics that weren't there. There was one he started to talk about, a missal, he called it (I made him spell that one) that he had had once and that had been lost. He told me, though, that it would come back; only when I asked him some questions about it, he shut up tight as a clam and looked worried, which is his natural way, it seems.

I've just seen the Powells going home, and the poet's strolling up and down the Jericho Terrace below me. He's alone. I wonder where Arthura is. I think he's been writing all day on something called "The Ruin of Doom." He didn't even come to the gallery this morning to listen to Arthura, and let me tell you that when that happens there must be a powerful reason.

Half a minute.

He's just called up and asked me to join him, and as the light's beginning to get a bit thick, I think I will.

Give my best to Mrs. Schenk and tell her the momma and poppa birds I saw this afternoon—

Deeming that the ornithological message might be postponed until he could manipulate the typewriter under a lamp, Tom set the Rem. Port. aside and went down to join the poet on the terrace.

He had seldom been alone with Evelyn Arnott and never at a time like this, when the world was bathed in colour from a setting sun. He wondered what the poet would say to all this splendour. He might commence with "I never see, but what I" —continuing with some flowery comparison. He might be simple and intense: "Isn't it terrific?" Possibly he would utter a platitude about the sunsets we never see.

Instead of saying any of these things or anything else about

the sunset, Arnott said nothing. But he looked! In that ashen look the American caught a glimpse of mysteries that he himself would never grasp.

Tom hesitated to break the silence, but after five minutes he found the strain of walking beside the poet too great unless he talked.

"You look tired tonight. You've been staying in all day, haven't you?"

"I *am* weary. I am literally exhausted. I should not be here now if it were not necessary to stretch one's legs and expand one's lungs. I grudge the time taken from my pen and ink, but I shall write better verses for a little exercise."

"That's right. But you should have been with us today. You would have enjoyed it."

"Indeed I should have," responded Arnott with strong emphasis, "instead of spending an afternoon with no other company than my bronze Buddha."

"Your what?"

"My little bronze god—not so little either." Arnott looked up the scarlet ivy to the window of his bedchamber. "He sits up there on the dark mantel-shelf and exudes humility and endurance. I have taken a fancy to him since coming here, and am glad they chose to domicile me with him. Without his encouragement I might falter more than once in hewing and forging my materials, for the Muse is a stern taskmistress, my dear relative."

"I'll bet she is. I'm glad I haven't got her for mine."

Later they paused for a while by the low wall on the edge of the terrace overlooking the sound. A whimsical evening breeze brought the savour of a warmer clime. The sunset, composed, as Tom would have it, of bars of coloured ice, was melting, dissolving into one strawberry pink, like the Methodist chapel in St. David's. Already the waters below them, rolling

over the Bitches with a booming sound, were one dark waste.

The American looked at his companion as searchingly as possible in that defeated light. The white face, as it always did, seemed to body forth a pressure of inner force.

Suddenly both became aware that someone had come to the entrance from the hall of statues, someone who seemed of gigantic size in the three-quarters darkness, like a huge castellan filling half the doorway.

Tom caught his breath, and Arnott asked quickly, "It that you, Hector?"

"It is." The tone of those two words set a trip-hammer going in Tom's breast.

Both strode toward the man in the entrance.

"Robert—have you seen Robert?" asked Hector, while he advanced a pace to meet them, with the faintest pucker of apprehension visible on his face.

"Do you want him?" asked Tom.

"I could do with him. He isn't where he should be, and that makes me want him more."

"Not where he should be? I don't get you."

"Not in his cell, not in his cubicle, I mean. Not in his room either."

Arnott, so far impassive, said with sharp distinctiveness, "Must we search for him, do you think?"

"I am searching for him."

"Look here," thrust in Tom, "are you sure he came in the castle after tea?"

"Yes, yes," chafed the poet. "He entered this doorway and left me. He said he had received a parcel in the post that needed attention. I think, Hector, that we ought to tell Frost at once of this—vanishing."

"That's the devil of it," Bransonby rumbled. "I can't find Frost either. It looks as if we had something cut out for us."

He cast his large gaze about the dying heavens. "There'll be precious little light left, too. We'll have to leave a note for Frost and then proceed on our way."

It was possible to summon Powell from the dish towel, and to bring Mottram away from his charge without alarming Arthura or Sir Anthony. A few words sufficed to explain the situation, and shortly afterward (the lower floor and the terraces having been scoured in vain) the four men emerged from the precincts of the castle. They had decided to carry the search farther afield.

"Why the dickens should he have come this way?" asked Tom.

"Enough," answered Hector grimly. "I hope we won't find out something as disastrous as last time."

"What? It's happened before?"

"Yes, yes." Tom thought he detected a touch of grimness in the big man's voice. "Once—to his grief and ours. He changed his Will after that day."

"Go on, go on."

"Why, there was some grazing on the island when the farm was here, you know. And even after Uncle Anthony's return from South America we had a few sheep on the meadow-land from time to time. One day when Robert was rambling on the cairn there for exercise—he gave up his exercise afterwards—he came across a beast that must have fallen off a ledge and been crushed by loose rock it set rolling. Robert was naturally kind-hearted and the discovery gave him a sickish turn. In fact, it upset him so badly that he couldn't struggle home afterward, and had to be fetched. We went out after him, like tonight. The upshot of it was that Robert wrote to his solicitors, and told us a little later that he had altered his Will to the extent of fifty thousand pounds, which was the sum he intended to leave to the R. S. P. C. A. If he died a violent death it was to

be a lot more. So what we lost the animals seemed to gain."

"Well, well, well. So I guess you don't want him to run into any more damaged sheep."

"Oh, leaving out the Will, I don't want him to for his own sake. It might send him off for good, and nobody wishes that for the poor old lad."

The high-pitched voice of Mottram broke in.

"If he met a sheep again, the Coroner would give us the benefit."

"Benefit? What has the Coroner to do with it?"

"It's a crazy Will," muttered Bransonby, but it was obvious that he didn't relish the turn of the conversation.

Mottram, however, was not to be headed off, while in his eager, rasping tones, with a certain lavish gusto, he explained what he said was no secret. "Robert calls it policy," he declared.

Everything, it seemed, would be contingent upon the way Robert Veryan died. It was evident that he expected to be murdered; so he wished to make sure that no individual whatever would profit if he died a violent death. In case of a Coroner's verdict of homicide in any of its various forms, the family was to be absolutely cut off.

It occurred to Tom, and the thought clung to him, that the two men he spoke with, one eager and one loath to discuss the Will, were the two poorest of the Veryan family.

They were passing through the weed-grown alleys among the deserted outbuildings of the farm, under the wall of the chapel that stood there. This building—at first no doubt a mere anchoritish cell—had been enlarged to form a chantry for the monks whose tradition lingered in the names of Hieronymo's Pantry and The Refectory, the core of Shakespeare's castle. It was oriented north and south. Since it rested on a vaulted foundation, its dryness had recommended it for a hayloft when the farm had been renovated, and cattle had sometimes been lodged in the groined chamber beneath. Sir Anthony had restored the

place to some of its former dignity. It had been cleared of several tons of rubbish, the walls and roof had been mended, and an altar had been erected where perhaps none had stood since Henry VIII.

While Tom looked upward at the black line of the roof melting into the black sky, a fugitive sunset gleam caressed the mortared wall.

"Does anyone ever go in there?"

"Hardly in a lifetime. I *have* known Robert to enter it, though."

"Why not take a look, then?"

"Oh, he'd have come out long ago. Still—"

So it was they ascended the short series of steps with an iron railing, a narrow flight to the stout new oaken door. Hector leading, pushed it open, and he and those whose faces crowded at his shoulder gave low exclamations.

The interior of the chapel was an étude in colourless tones. Tom—already taken aback by the dimensions of the room, for it was startlingly smaller than the appearance of the building warranted—was quick to discern the pools and patches of various shades. In the main, the chapel was a black cave, but a last pale gleam fell through the western window. On a dark bench in this partial light, half prone, half propped, sprawled Robert Veryan. And on the floor, beneath his gigantic hand, lay something that was the whitest thing in the room.

"Dead or alive?" wondered the American, still staring from the door. He felt a decided aversion to approaching that figure, doubtful whether quick or dead.

For a few seconds rapid whispers were rife among the group in the doorway. Then Hector moved forward cautiously, like behemoth tiptoeing. And when he was at the point of touching the object of their quest, the tenseness ended.

Hector started back when Robert Veryan stretched and awoke.

The bearded man gave a whimper of distress on finding the tiny place thronged, as it seemed to him, with shadowy, unexpected figures. After that low, sharp cry his voice changed to recognition.

"Hector!" he exclaimed, "and you others."

"All safe, Uncle Robert, but you almost gave us a merry chase for nothing. We were going to search for you—out there in the wilds, I mean."

"But why?"

"Don't you realize the time? It's latish, you know."

"I am sorry; indeed I am sorry. Sleep stole over me insensibly."

"It usually does," cried Hector. "But of all places, here."

"I come here occasionally, you know." There was a hint of rebuke in Veryan's tone. "I—I am not, you know, a religious man, but I have a feeling, perhaps more than a feeling, that here harm will not touch me." He stooped and picked up the white thing on the floor. "I brought these booklets with me—most extraordinary. They are not what I thought at all. In fact I am intensely puzzled. Surely these were not meant for me."

Hector asked, "Are those what were in your parcel? Let's see 'em."

For the first time he produced from his pocket an electric torch, within the radius of whose beam Veryan's large trembling hands held the three pamphlets, fanwise, so that their titles might be read. All three were stamped with the words, "Advance Sheets—not for circulation," and their titles were as far remote from Robert Veryan's hobby as could be:

"H. H. Dale: *On certain aspects of biochemistry.*
Oswald Oyestermeyer: *Evidences for the new theory of race promotion.*
C. F. Trefusis: *Spectroscopic studies of the asteroids.*"

Veryan's tone verged on the querulous. "They're from my

agents, but why they were sent to me I cannot understand, for I am not in the remotest degree interested in any of their subjects."

"Most recondite, most extraordinary," wavered Arnott.

The sharp voice of Mottram was heard. He had been trying to get a glimpse over or around Hector. "Let me see them." He stretched his hand a considerable distance in order to bring the titles within line of his vision, and in the act his arm shot a long way out beyond his sleeve.

For Tom that was a thrilling moment. On the wrist thus exposed was a long bright red mark, like a whip lash, almost as vivid as that wheal on his forehead which was the permanent result of his misfortune in Wiltshire the night Sir Anthony had rescued him. Besides that mark were several punctures, more or less old, uncommonly like the pits which might appear on a "drug fiend's" wrist.

Tom stifled his surprise, realized that Veryan was speaking. "It's extremely curious. I shall show them to Sir Anthony at once, and to Frost."

Hector rubbed his chin. "Sir Anthony would certainly want to see these if he knew they'd come—and Frost, too. You'll have to find Frost first, though."

Veryan's exclamation stabbed the dark.

"What? He's missing? Not missing?"

"Oh, he'll turn up all right," the big man blustered. "Come along, everybody, or they'll be wondering what's become of us all."

They commenced to emerge from the chapel.

"Hector," said Robert Veryan, laying his hand on the other's sleeve, "I think we ought to see—someone about having some guards here."

"When nothing's happened after all these weeks?"

"All the more, all the more," exclaimed the bearded man. "These empty days are—are beginning to wear on my nerves,

Hector. I was thinking only this afternoon while we were so carefree down there on the rocks—"

"He's right," Mottram confirmed, crowding down the chapel steps to catch up with those in the lead. "I feel the need of a stronger guard than myself sometimes. I feel Sir Anthony—"

"Very well, very well," acquiesced Hector, giving in unexpectedly. "We'll see him now, and get him to urge Frost to do what you want. Uncle Anthony will want to have his say about where the guards are going to be, if any; depend on that. But of course we can't have sentinels here for ever."

"And while we're with Anthony," said Veryan, "we need not mention the, er, chapel episode, need we?"

"I should say not."

"Look, people, someone's coming!" Tom interrupted.

A short, dark figure, like a moving portion of the dark wall they approached, was stirring between them and the castle. Soon they recognized Frost.

Hector greeted him with, "Great God, man, where've you been?"

"Then it's all right, Bransonby?" asked the detective. "Ah, I see you have Mr. Robert Veryan with you. I received your note."

"Yes, Robert here dropped into a nap in the chapel. But where have you been yourself?"

"Pardon," said Frost icily, "but that, I take it, is my own affair."

There was menace hinted in Bransonby's rough voice. "You say so, but are you sure? It'd be a great deal more comfortable for all of us—"

Frost licked his lips. "I'll not permit you to use such expressions. I have been doing my duty, sir, that's enough."

"And what was your duty?"

Frost's mouth closed with a snap.

At the end of that long letter home, which he finished late that night, Tom wrote two paragraphs he was to think back on long afterward:

There won't be any more murders. Frost and Sir Anthony have fixed up a sentry system. We have constables patrolling the corridors and the main rooms here, as well as ones parading around the Jericho Terrace and the Monkey Terrace. Only there's no constable in with the statuary. Even the sergeant offered to resign before he'd take a chance with those Greeks. Instead, he is stationed at the head of the winding stairs from the boat-house.

The thing is simple, and yet somehow I have lost my way. The things must fit, all of them, but I can't splice them. Veryan wandering off like that, and those crazy pamphlets, and Mottram's wrist pockmarked and it looked like whip-lashed, and Frost sneaking off somewhere in secret—whew! I feel as if I was right on the brink of the heart of this mystery, but tonight, at least, the solution has breezed by. The stuff is there, all right, but I can't take hold of it.

ANOTHER day how pityingly he would have flouted the suggestion: be with Arthura and not be happy! Yet now, though in a glowing morning they wandered alone together, and toward that most delectable section of the coast, the haunt of the Bronze Men, he had much ado to meet her brave sallies with a smile.

What was she doing here with him anyway? Why wasn't she in her proper place in the castle with Sir Anthony, instead of tripping happily toward St. David's Head? What right had she to be roaming in the loveliness of Whitesand, to climb down among the remains of St. Patrick's excavated chapel where the white stones marked the resting-places of holy men? What right had she to be as she was, light, graceful, vivacious, bewitching?

These firm fields strewn thick with buttercups, that meadow in prospect where little white flowers with scarlet hearts looked like a vast snowy sheet worked in brilliant threads, these waste expanses from whose grey boulders (weathered to the pale blue of rain) he pried yellow lichens absently with his little finger—they made him sick at heart.

Then suddenly, while she gestured north along the torn coast, spoke of the ancient enclosures spread between hill and cliff, made some small jest, laughed—the intolerable burden lifted from his spirit.

For in a flash he had divined the bleakness beneath her merriment.

Everything changed. He was able to respond in kind. "The Bronze Men, eh? Funny people they must have been. But, gosh,

they're your people and my people, Arthura. I mean, we *are* them—they—and they're us. Isn't it so?"

"Yes, I'm a Bronze Woman, don't you think? I really—sometimes I do feel at home up here, Tom."

"I'd want someone to cheer me up if I'd staked myself a layout here—and how!" He was unaware of the psychic need that evoked his next words. They came rushing out: "Listen, Arthura, you've got to tell me something. You remember the day Norshire was—found? That's like Powell talking, though. The morning after he was scragged, I mean?"

She did not turn toward him, or start or seem surprised. Her eyes wandered across and beyond the promontory. "Yes, of course I remember."

"Well, something happened that morning, and I've hankered ever since to know what it meant. None of my biz, perhaps, but anyhow—well—"

"What is it, Tom? I'll tell you."

"Mottram and I dashed downstairs and through the statues, but I wasn't feeling as eager as he evidently was, and so he left me behind in there among the curios, and I saw you and Bransonby talking there just for a moment. You remember?"

"I—what do you mean?"

Tom kicked a stone three or four yards. "Well, maybe you'll think—but the thing is this. Bransonby was sort of half-bullying you, and you were more or less crying. He wanted you to admit something, and you wouldn't or couldn't. And naturally that's worried me."

Her glance returned from the sparkle of waters. She looked at him soberly, steadfastly. "You were troubled about me—on account of—that?"

"I'll say. I never realized how much until now. But how could I help it—seeing—" He swallowed. "How could I help it?"

"Tom, you *are* nice. But you've been worrying for nothing.

You know about the dream I had two years ago, when Standish —was killed? The tearing cloth?"

"Yes, Bransonby put me wise to that while we crossed the sound that first evening."

"It was about that."

"You mean you—had it again the night Norshire—"

"I just don't know. The harder I tried to grasp it, the more uncertain it was, like all dreams. Sometimes I'm sure I had it."

"How do you feel now?"

"Not quite sure. Let's not talk about it any more, Tom. I want to go out on the headland, don't you?"

"Anywhere you say," he acquiesced, and he made ready to follow her with a will. Her very reluctance to dwell on the problem of the dream cheered him now.

Going silently to her side, he watched her face, now grave and intent, the woman looking from the eyes of the child; and he considered: "I guess that unfeeling stuff was only a kind of camouflage. She's got nerves and feelings and everything. She may be scared stiff yet." The supposition that she might be was rather pleasant to him.

They bent their way westward through the stony hollow. Soon they were standing side by side on a long range of piled-up rock, the remains of a barrier at least ten feet high, extending as far as they could see north and south down both slopes of the peninsula to the sheer cliffs.

"We're on the wall of the Metropolis, Uncle Anthony calls it, and the city is—was—there."

Shading his eyes, Tom peered.

"Boy! It's gone underground."

What remained of the headland, thrusting its tongue further into the sea, was mostly a solitude of ink-blue rock, silent, forbidding. It rose in serried blocks or lay in courses, a ribbed foundation for an eternal city, but of a city he discerned no sign

until the girl beside him pointed out a congeries of stone circles that lay on terraces under the highest crown of stone.

"That's the Metropolis. Shall we go there? Further south there's a gap in this wall that lets the old trackway through. It must be the oldest road in Wales, and it leads to the circles."

They had an hour to spend. It was all too short for venturing down to the extremity of that spit of stone where Mottram's father had lost his life, for crawling along the ledge that led to the crystal cave at the water's edge, for lazing on the moss-cushioned chine of the headland and watching the sea lash the distant Bishop and his Clerks.

She was the first to descry the storm that rushed from the north, visible across the sunlight of Cardigan Bay. A word from Arthura, and he saw the tumbled clouds mantling the sea.

"Whew! It's going to be blowy and wet here pretty soon. What'll we do to keep dry? Take to the cave?"

"The cave's too far, and the ledge is so narrow getting to it. If we hurried we'd fall off, and then we *would* be wet. No, I can show you a place up here."

"On the headland?"

"Yes. Where were your eyes, Tom, when we looked from the wall?"

"All right, I'm crushed. Show me."

She was away, racing. Already the full warm sun had given place to striations of moving light, and while they fled through the dead city, big drops of rain broke on the rock beneath their feet. Then with a thrill, Tom recognized the shelter she had chosen. Whatever purpose, sepulchral, religious, communal, the thing had served in ancient days, it was never more sought than now, when the scattered rain-drops changed to a pelting barrage.

In a scoop of the headland a tilted capstone stood, relic of an enormous cromlech almost twelve feet square. Three of its supporters lay beside it, but the last, well over a yard in height, remained in place, so that the capstone made a sloping canopy.

Tom let Arthura win the race and creep first into the slanting cell. A moment later they rested there together, gazing at the downpour and listening to its patter on the thick roof above them. They were content to hear that singularly comfortable sound and to watch Carn Llidi, already grey, through the grey film of rain.

How did it all come to happen? It was useless to attempt to remember. They were very near. "Will you come under my wing?" he asked; her answer was to settle restfully into the gathering of his arm, and to look more restful.

There remained for him only the tossing memory of embraces given and returned; of protestations, declarations; "I love you, darling, indeed I do," "I've loved you ever since you came"; of eyes shining, kissed; of rain-damp, scented hair; of the girl in his arms, sobbing, sobbing, sobbing, as if her heart would break —then long afterwards crying still, but contented in her tears. It was a bitter-sweet, devastating dream.

Once he barked, "Bransonby loves you. I suppose you know that."

She shuddered. "Not Hector alone. All of them—all Uncle Anthony's nephews and grand-nephews and—all—"

"Um-m, I've noticed that." (He really thought he had.) "But why so downhearted, dearest?"

"Those that are dead—did."

He took his cheek from hers to look into her eyes. "You don't mean—what I think?"

Her whisper was as frightened as he could wish. "How can I help wondering, d-darling, if it—had anything to do with me? They keep dying, one after another."

"One after another," he said slowly, and then, "They loved you. But why shouldn't they?"

"Yes, but not just as a—cousin—should, but the way I didn't want them to. And they keep—dying. Oh, Tom, can't you understand? If only they wouldn't *stay*."

His eyes narrowed, jaw set like a full-blooded Veryan's. "Arthura, dearest, did you ever—care—for one of them? I only ask because—"

"Never, not one. Standish was the nicest boy, but I couldn't love him as he wished. I liked Lionel, too, and when he died I felt as if there was no one left I could—share anything with. I didn't love him, though, and he knew it. Uncle Robert once—proposed to me, like the others. And Evelyn has come here all on account of me, but I could never love him either. He's so repressed, bound up in a knot, tight. I've loved only you, Tom, always."

He made no answer, save to twine his fingers numbingly with hers, and a little later she said thoughtfully. "I couldn't have said it yesterday, but I have done all the time."

"I wonder why they died," he muttered, as if the question had never occurred to him before. Then he answered her speech in words. "Yes, dearest, you don't need to tell me. I remember the handkerchief."

She gave a shaky little laugh, "How sick and desperate I felt with everything for a little while that night. I used to feel like that sometimes, somehow, against my will."

"Against your will, sweetheart?"

"Yes, whenever I was tired and disheartened, it was against my will. There was something inside me saying 'Be brave.' And yet it didn't seem part of me at all. It was as if someone was helping me. But it hurt, too, it hurt terribly to have to be brave."

He chuckled, not a happy sound. "A funny kind of inhibition, I'll say: to have to keep a stiff upper lip."

"But I've always been like that, dear."

"Always? Are you sure? How long can you honestly remember?"

"Oh, ages. I think—well, I don't remember, really. But the thing was there, as if it had been always . . ."

"I don't think I—quite—"

The clasp of her fingers was so tight that the bones felt through. "It's only imagination, I suppose. I've felt sometimes as if the castle itself was making me stay. I can remember being alone once or twice in the big old rooms, and there was something like a voice in my brain, whispering—or a secret voice creeping out from behind the arras. It was trying to hold me, as if I *belonged* to the castle and could live nowhere else. It wouldn't release me. I think that is what has been in the back of my mind all this time." She straightened her body a little, leaned away from Tom's clasp. "Do you think it's too frightfully silly?"

He had been wondering while she spoke if the atmosphere of such a place as Kestrel's Eyrie could enfold, could so strongly bind. Could this old Gothic place—but that *was* silly! Hadn't they been telling him all along that the castle was only eighteenth century Gothic, imitation stuff?

She did not wait for him to answer. "It's all gone now, anyway. Why, I feel like a free girl for the first time. Oh, Tom, loving you has pushed it all away—replaced it. I can never be the same again. It's gone, absolutely gone!"

"Being brave, you mean?"

"Yes, being brave *that* way. Something fell away a few minutes ago, like a coat that never quite fitted, when I could say, 'I love you.' I'm not—very brave, now, you know, but I feel so much happier to be able to be afraid. Oh, Tom, try to believe I am human. I don't believe you do, really—you make me feel like such a little girl now, as if I never should have put away my dolls."

"I'll get some for you," he assured her, his fingers straying over her hair. He bent his cheek against it. "Lots and lots."

She buried her face in his most convenient shoulder. "Don't tease me, even if I am such a baby. Do you mind?"

"You're grown up enough for me," his natural masculine egotism let him say. "It's wonderful, baby dearest, to think that

you—love me. How can you be sure? You haven't known me long."

The face gave a reproachful nudge. "Well, then, how can you be sure? Have you known me many ages longer than I've known you?" Her arms around his neck tightened, squeezed. "You're a darling, Thomas dear."

"Say, you're strong!"

"I have to be for some of the études and things I play. I *will* play after this! I know what Dammerung meant when he stuck to 'promising.' Now, now I know what I lacked. And it's all your fault."

The rain had passed over, the sun had gained ascendancy, and only the pools in the weathered rock remained to prove a shower.

"I wish I could take you away from it all, darling. Take you away from it now, forever."

"If only you might."

Neither told the reason why it could not be, but both were thinking of the old man for whom her presence, her assistance, and her music meant life.

Afterward, before they parted, she to return to Porth 'Stinian along the coast, he to tramp across the Burrows to St. David's:

"Shall we tell him yet?"

She answered softly, "Not yet, I think, Tom. But, oh, my dear, how shall I be able to keep him from seeing?"

His feet were light and his heart was merry with the piping wind while he walked across the moors to St. David's, meeting no one he knew.

He wished to find Hawkwell, but seeing by the west clock of St. David's tower that it was a little after one, he decided to defer his visit until the solicitor had surely risen from luncheon. For the American, stirred by a score of leaping thoughts, food was impossible. He decided to pause at the Bishop's Palace Inn, where he might find Half-west, who was good company. The other journalists were long since gone to hover about the scene of the Birmingham horrors.

The car which Tom associated with the lean reporter, as gaunt a contraption as Half-west himself, was not standing before the hostel, and while he invaded the dark doorway, the American had a sense of emptiness within. In the murky bar no one was evident; the presiding goddess, entering from her sanctuary in the rear of the house, informed Tom that the bareboned journalist had looked in and had dropped the information that he might look in again.

No doubt Half-west was prowling about the neighbourhood. Tom felt sufficiently encouraged to wait a few minutes; so he ordered a half-pint and, carrying it to one of the stalls, endeavoured to cultivate his taste for beer. Either this was not good beer, or he was definitely not a beer-drinker, for when twenty minutes had passed he had caused only a fraction of a gill to disappear.

He had consulted his watch for the second time, when a youth who seemed younger than Tom himself, clad in a blazer and grey flannels, hatless, breathless, burst into the bar and looked impatiently about. Clearly he was not one for whom the place

was a chapel of ease. He did not heed Tom or evoke the goddess from her asylum, but strode to the window with the aristocratic swing that few except Metropolitan policemen attain, and glanced up and down the street. Once or twice Tom heard little mutterings proceed from him.

By the window-light the youth's cherub cheeks and Dresden colouring were manifest. In build he was slight and waspish, and his apparent immaturity went queerly with his attitude of anxiety and expression of determined truculence.

"Now where the dickens have I seen that spoiled infant before?" Tom asked himself. "Was it down by the sea that first night?"

He emerged from his stall and crossed the room in his own ungainly manner, saying, "Stranger, you appear to be waiting for somebody. Excuse me asking, but is it the reporter that answers to the title of Half-west? Because if—"

The other had turned expectantly at the sound of Tom's movement, but his face darkened in response to his speech.

"It's not a reporter and I wouldn't talk to a reporter if he offered me a pound a word," he declared, his accent indicating that he was English and probably of recent transplanting.

"Meaning you have something to say?" probed Tom curiously, and saw the downy cheeks harden for a moment. The American was doubly sure that he had already run across that youthful face with its churlish expression.

Tom's inflection conveyed the proper message, for the youth converted some of his energy into an ingenuous scrutiny of the American's features, while he fenced with the suggestion.

"I didn't say so. But, look here, aren't you an American?"

"I didn't say so. But I am."

"Then you must be named Stapleton. You're the American cousin on the island, aren't you?"

"Marvellous how you have the advantage of me. You're right again."

"By jove!" His face was suddenly energized by thought, dubious thought, as if he might be meditating a request just beyond his courage to make.

Tom interrupted this paroxysm. "I don't want to be fresh, but I can't quite place where I've seen you before. I have seen you, all right. Now, it couldn't have been in the castle at any time, could—"

"Oh, no, indeed not!" said the youth bitterly.

"You haven't been in the castle?"

"Haven't been there!" cried the other, with a grievance throbbing in his words. "I didn't say so!"

"What the ding ding do you mean?"

"I've been there—once!" The cherub flared up a very fire-engine of wrath. "And what do you think they did to me? Kicked me out! That's what! For no reason at all. I could have handled—"

"Oh, you're a reporter yourself, then?"

"A reporter!" shrilled the other in the ascendancy of scorn, spurning the name as if it were a byword. He flushed up to the roots of his curly, light brown hair. "I'm not a reporter. I wouldn't touch a reporter with a rod and line."

"Well, Mr.—uh-h-h—Mr.—"

"Keverne."

"Keverne—what are you, then, if it isn't too much trouble to say it plainly?"

"I'm the locum here, and I was second on the scene of the murder two weeks ago!"

"You were what? Say that again."

"I was second on the scene of the murder, after the family, and was kicked out without a thank-you."

"But didn't they—"

"I got my fee all right, double," Keverne ground out between his teeth, as if that had been an additional insult. "I didn't care

about that. Well, they booted me out; now let them get along without what I know."

Tom's scalp twitched. "Say, this is serious. Do you mean to say you have some information you haven't told anybody?"

The wrathful one increased in defiance, quite forgetful of his former secretiveness. "Yes, I have. Some of the strangest, wildest, maddest information you ever heard of. But Sir Anthony had me kicked out in favour of this old stable-companion of his, and now he can jolly well whistle for it! That's that. *I'm* not doing him any favours, you can depend on it."

"But, say," Tom gulped. "This is serious, you know. You can't—can't—"

"Can't I though?" Keverne laughed contemptuously, but his ire was subsiding. "It's true enough, I've been thinking lately—well, it's a bit on the risky side, for me. You see, I withheld the information on account of being in a huff because they wanted Clegyrn there instead of me. Now, if it had been some London specialist—well, anyhow, if I come out with it now, I may be summoned before the General Medical Council and get struck off the Register."

"But still," Tom avouched stubbornly, "if what you have to say is useful, I don't see how you can—"

"That's another knotty point, confound it. It's damned queer, and all that, but how do I know if it's useful or not?"

"Yes, but it might be."

"Then there's another thing. For all I know, this man Clegyrn may have smelt the same rat I did, and, er, let it out of the bag. *Then* I'd have smashed myself for nothing."

"I haven't heard anything of it. But of course that doesn't signify."

"No, that doesn't mean a great deal, does it? From what I hear, this Inspector Frost talks sometimes, but keeps the best things to himself."

"You've got to take the chance," Tom insisted. "Unless the rat smelt mighty loud, I don't figure Clegyrn got a whiff of it. Of all the incorrigible duds, give me Clegyrn. He can't even manage his patient, and, say—"

"Don't run down Clegyrn too hard," said the youngster. "It wasn't his fault he was sent for, and it isn't his fault he's no good smelling out rats. Here he comes, by the way."

"He's coming here, now? He was at the castle this morning."

"Yes, I have an appointment with him."

"Oh, excuse me. I'll just run back to my beer. Do you mind me here?"

"Not at all. Discuss your beer."

"But by jingo, I want to talk to you afterwards—"

"Right-ho! I won't melt."

The stamp of feet in the vestibule was followed by the entrance of the old doctor, just as Tom was safely ensconced in his nook. Greetings were exchanged, succeeded by a transaction which was conducted in modified tones, of which Tom caught the meaning of a word here and there. One was "sportsman" and the other "blood," which led the American to believe that the remarks had to do with horses and breeding, upon which Clegyrn must be a local authority. A small parcel passed from Clegyrn to the youth, and one or two pieces of paper, which crackled, went in the opposite direction.

It was not long before the locum said clearly, "You *are* a sportsman, Clegyrn. This will make my thesis—" An expression which the permitted eavesdropper thought sufficiently strange. That speech, indeed, brought the interview to an end.

Clegyrn disappeared.

The English cherub looked after him with a shake of the head and a half-contemptuous, half-pitying turn of the lips. "No, Stapleton, I don't think he smelt the rat."

Tom snorted. "Let's get down to business. What about this secret stuff that you're keeping dark? I want to know—"

"Stop there!" The cherub ran his fingers through his hair. "You want to know! Very well, I'll tell you, and you be the judge. If booting me out—"

"Get that grousing out of your system, why don't you? Why turn red-headed about being paid a double fee and getting rid of your patient? You say it wasn't the money. You weren't just curious, were you, wanting to sniff around?"

"I should say I was curious," cried Keverne in a rush of words. "How often do you find a man with a *normal* blood count after a terrific hæmorrhage like Sir Anthony had? It's a thousand to one—I'd almost say it's a dead cert—he's got polycythæmia!"

For a moment Tom didn't know whether he was going to laugh or not. From the intense seriousness of the cherubic cheeks, he judged it well that he controlled himself.

"And do you hanker after these polythemaniacs?"

"Polycythæmia," said Keverne correctively. "I do! Good lord, man, I'm writing my thesis on the thing!"

"You a doctor, and haven't written your thesis yet? This gets curiouser and curiouser."

"I'm not a doctor but a plain medical man. It's the doctorate I'm after. Do you wonder I go potty when I find a case of polycythæmia I can't approach? They're as rare as black albinos!"

"But say! Is this thing dangerous?"

Keverne laughed. "I think not. It's just an abnormality of the composition of the blood. You might go years without finding it present in any of your patients."

"Um-m. Yep, I begin to see what it's all about. So Clegyrn's been helping you out."

"Yes, for sportsmanship and a couple of quid, he's given me the samples I've needed. Of course he had the deuce of a time wangling to bleed Sir Anthony. Not that either of them knew what it was about!"

"But for crying out loud! Do you mean to say that you

daren't tell the police that Sir Anthony is a whatchucallem? What difference can that make?"

"None at all. But I know a few things that do make a difference."

Tom hunched himself nearer, elbows on table, chin on clenched hands. "Well, spit 'em out, then!" While the youth in the opposite high-backed chair of the stall seemed even now to hesitate, the American redoubled his entreaty in frantic whispers. "For crime's sake, talk. Great guns, we're wasting time."

"You see—"

"Come on, come on, what is this sensation? You can't go back on your decision now."

"I'm not thinking of that. It will be a relief to share this with someone. But I want to put it to you correctly."

"Just give me the general effect in one blob," urged Tom. "How long are you going to keep me on pins and needles?"

"I was going to say that I want to keep the distinction between the truth and a mere statement of alleged facts unverified, or an unverified inference, really."

"Carry on. I'll remember the difference."

"Pull me up if I seem to be wrong," said the cherub, with an air of settling down to an extended recital in a way that cheered Tom. "As near as I can remember, I was called to the castle at about a quarter past five, and I arrived less than half an hour after old Bunyan."

"Wait a minute. Bunyan?"

"Yes. He's the retired naval surgeon—has a bungalow on the coast south of Porth 'Stinian."

"I remember. Well?"

"Well, say I arrived at a few minutes past six. That handsome man Mottram took me in and I had a look at both victims right away. Sir Anthony was still on the floor of the Refectory (I think they call it), though they'd moved him out of the lake of blood he'd lost. They hardly liked to carry him upstairs in

that state. Crabtree *was* upstairs, in his room where he later died. That's perhaps beside the point, which is this:

"Old Bunyan was strutting about, puffing out his chest and giving little clucks. I had about three minutes' examination of each man, and then I tackled the ex-naval light. I said, 'What blankety-blank treatment have you given?'

"He squinted and winked and stared. 'Treatment?' says he, and coughs a few times. I guessed he'd botched something. 'Damn my eyes! (or something like that) I've given no treatment. I'm waiting for my case of chemicals!'

"To make it brief, he had two cases looking pretty much alike, but only one of 'em was stocked with his full kit. In his hurry he'd brought the wrong one, which contained only a few instruments and bandages. Apart from stopping the wounds, he'd done nothing.

"Well, it wasn't as bad as it might have been, for I'd brought some of the proper stuff with me—stuff he hadn't heard of, by the way—and we gave Sir Anthony an injection and got him upstairs. But all the time I was thinking like fury. For it looked to me as if old Bunyan must have lied."

Tom's attention, fixed to the point of painfulness, hardly let him speak. "Go on, go on. Why?"

"Give me time to breathe, there's a good fellow. Later I had to believe one of three things. One was that Bunyan might have been dabbling with the medicine cupboard above Sir Anthony's bed and had some mad idea of keeping it still. But there was none of the drug I had in mind in the cupboard; all the things there were as harmless as tooth-wash. The second possibility was that Bransonby or Miss Veryan or both had told only part of the truth about their own actions. Or else again someone came through the rooms *after* the assault and *before* Bransonby and Miss Veryan made their so-called discovery!"

"Great golly! Wouldn't that make your hair curl? But how the Sam Hill do you know?"

"By what he had done to the victims."

"Drat it all, what do you mean? What had he done to them?"

"Tried to save Crabtree's life, for one thing. Damn near did, too, if you ask me."

"Tried to save him? What about Sir Anthony? Didn't he try to save him, too?"

A slight cloud passed over Keverne's early-morning face, omen of a problem unresolved. "I don't know. The fact is, he did something to Sir Anthony that I don't understand yet."

Screwing his face into an unpleasant expression, Tom stuck two fingers under his collar, to loosen it. He felt choked.

"Well, I call that the limit! But, see here, you're still holding out on me. Just what did this slippery johnny do in each case? Or is it beyond the comprehension of anybody but an expert?"

"Lord, no. The things are simple. Here, I'll tell you my observations from the beginning. As it happened, it was Crabtree I saw first. He was suffering from a number of lacerations, more or less serious. One nasty one had just missed striking the carotid and doing his business for him right away. Bunyan had done his best to plug the cuts. I found the usual symptoms of shock, severe shock, both hæmorrhagic and surgical: grey skin, pallid lips, hands cold and clammy to touch—and his pulse was racing. But I noticed at once that his respiration, instead of being frequent and shallow, was decidedly slow; slower than normal, I mean. It was almost like a series of drawn-out sighs. I could hardly believe my senses for a moment. Then I looked more carefully at the man's eyes."

Tom hung, tottering, toward the speaker, his own breathings much unlike Lionel Crabtree's as described.

"I got a bit of a shock myself, then, when I'd seen what I'd missed. I'd overlooked the eyes because Crabtree's pupils were exceedingly light, and the change wasn't so noticeable. Besides, the illumination in the room was rotten, and I had to hold a candle close to his face to see what I wanted. There was no de-

fensive reflex on the patient's part, which was in line with shock condition, but the pupils of the eyes—well, as I said, I felt queer myself for a minute when I saw! He had no pupils at all."

Tom also suffered shock at that moment. "But that's—that's impossible, isn't it?"

"That was how it looked at first. I told you his eyes were of a very light colour; well, the pupils had shrunk to mere points, and I had hard work to find 'em!"

"Say, what I don't know about medicine would—but, see here, you said—didn't you say that this mysterious arrival, johnny-in-the-dark, had tried to save Crabtree? In all the books I've read, eyes like pin-points are a sign of doping."

"You're right. I guessed at once that Crabtree had been given a shot of morphia, an enormous dose. In fact, I should say several doses at once!"

"But that was a sure way to kill him!"

Keverne shook his head sagely. "Old Bunyan might say so, or Clegyrn, but the profession knows now that it's about the best and speediest treatment for massive injuries there is. Ask any surgeon who worked on the battlefields during the War. They used to pour it into the wounded as if it was weak tea, and it was the only thing that would save 'em sometimes. Whoever did that to Crabtree took the one chance of saving him, and it wasn't Bunyan!"

Tom took a long breath, and plunged for more facts. "What had happened to Sir Anthony?"

"Well, when I'd discovered that Crabtree had been doctored according to the last word, I was prepared to find the same thing in Sir Anthony. But whoever the hidden genius was, he had used another method, and either he'd bungled it, or else it was one they didn't tell me about at Guy's."

Keverne placed his hands behind his head and considered a moment, thereby helping Tom on toward madness. "Yes, I may as well tell you. You see, every patient I have is a possible sub-

ject for my thesis. So I'd borrowed a little of Crabtree's blood for making a blood-count. Now, I found at once that Sir Anthony had been given no morphia, and that he had needed it worse. I examined him with more care, because I wasn't sure whether I ought to drain him of any more blood for a test. He had certainly lost an immense quantity already, and had as bad a case of shock as I've ever seen. I really thought he was done for. Shock isn't of long duration, but it's unpleasant while it lasts.

"Well, I needed only a few drops, which I concluded it wouldn't hurt him to lose, and I looked about for a place to withdraw them. He had a nasty wound on one arm already, and I tried the other, the left, where there were only some scratches. And again I got a shock myself. There were a few punctures there like the marks of injections, not from that night, nor many nights before, but years, maybe. They had probably been made without the proper aseptic precautions, and infection had resulted, leaving scars."

Sir Anthony's life spread itself before Tom's imagination in one purple lightning-flash. Great day! With all the rest of it, he now appeared to be one of the earliest dope-fiends on record!

But Keverne was still speaking. He had saved his most amazing touch for the last.

". . . I really went dizzy for a moment. There on the upper arm, as plain as anything you like, was the red wheal of a tourniquet. Those things don't last; it was probably gone a few hours later. But it was on the wrong arm!"

"Ur—wrong—ah-h-h—" Tom simply couldn't get the words out.

"It wasn't on the arm that had bled like a stuck pig. No, it was on the arm where the punctures had been made long ago!"

THE house of Hawkwell rested upon a moderate eminence outside the City. It was surrounded by a wall faced with stucco and garnished along the top with broken glass, a wall high enough to baffle the curiosity of a giraffe. Yet when, after two hours of restless roving, he had passed through the iron gateway of Italianate style, the American could see nothing remarkable inside. To reach the house Tom had to follow a path winding through a funereal garden whose crumbling urns and weather-stained statuary mourned for their hey-day two centuries ago.

He rounded a striving clump of rusty hawthorn and came in full view of the house itself. It wore an old face and seemed to look out through the classic pillars along its front like a prisoner behind bars.

Curious and a little nervous, Tom stared at the place. "Gee, you don't have to be a sensitive plant to get the atmosphere. Hades, if I had to live here, I'd be on a perpetual jag."

Glancing upward at the windows of the first floor, he fancied himself just too late to catch sight of someone who must have been regarding him from above. Was the white curtain still stirring? It seemed to be. There was nothing in that.

He pounded the knocker, and the reverberation in the old house set him tingling again. He caught his breath. "Nerves. I've got to snap out of it." He laughed, still weakly, in order to be assured that everything was all right. Hawkwell himself opened the door in the midst of that mirthless laugh.

He had opened it too quickly, thought the American in his confusion. He couldn't have come from upstairs. The watcher up there must be someone else—had probably called down . . .

The dapper little man beamed to supplement his string of welcoming phrases. Tom heard him vaguely. ". . . happy occasion . . . come into the parlour, Mr. Stapleton . . . your hat . . . thank you . . . *this* way . . . mind the step down."

"Oh, yes. Thanks."

"Pray be seated, Mr. Stapleton."

"Thanks." The chair was leather-lined, black. There were several such in the room, which was barricaded with books almost to the ceiling. The ceiling itself was grimed with the soot of hundreds of lamplit evenings, although a chandelier in the centre showed that lamps were lit there no more. Beneath the chandelier stretched a vast table whereupon volumes and papers lay in hills and vales. A mountain of nearly three feet high stood opposite Hawkwell, who dropped into a chair and picked up his gold-rimmed glasses as if he had just quitted the place to answer Tom's knock. Yet, if he had been working on those papers that lay before him, the light must have been switched on, for it was now dim in the room, and the western window admitted only a wraith of yellow which did not extend across the table.

Besides, the atmosphere of this parlour felt faintly warmed; yet the laid fire had not been lit.

Hawkwell was talking, rubbing his hands slowly together. ". . . sorry you have not honoured us before. May I ask, did you choose today for any particular reason?"

"No . . . no. I just . . . came."

"Quite so. You will stay for tea? I know the hour is early, but . . ."

"Thanks . . . really, I don't think . . . I just dropped in."

"Ah, yes. I can imagine. Relief. These ghastly events. You are finding it rather dreadful there at the castle, no doubt."

"I can stand it, I guess. Things aren't so bad now."

"Very good, very good." Hawkwell's finger-tips tapped one another. "I must admire your pluck."

Tom leaned across the litter. "There's more than that in it,

Mr. Hawkwell." In the three-quarter light he saw the solicitor's brows stir at the different emphasis. "I know it sounds—crazy to say it, but I may be some use yet. I have a strange, peculiar feeling that this mystery may be solved through me."

It was hard to tell what was in Hawkwell's intonation. "Ah! the gifted amateur of crime?"

"I wouldn't say that, Mr. Hawkwell; just trying to do my bit, that's all. And perhaps I didn't come here altogether—without any reason." He seemed to catch the shadow of a smile. "Yes, I'll admit it. I'm looking for help, Mr. Hawkwell."

Hawkwell purred persistently. "Anything that I have told Frost under the pledge of secrecy is, of course—"

"No secret stuff, of course," mumbled Tom hastily. "I was only thinking that a little talk with you might—"

The solicitor acceded with a courteous shrug and a smile. "You are welcome to my opinions, Mr. Stapleton. No need to say so. Worthless as they are, I may say, for Inspector Frost has no use for them."

Tom strained his eyes, but he couldn't read the expression in that usually genial maze of wrinkles.

"You mean he—passed up some of your ideas?"

"I think you express my meaning. I have a curious feeling, Mr. Stapleton, that these troubles go back to Maverick's generation."

"Maverick! I don't just—"

The yellow beam had faded, and the middle of the room was shadowy. Hawkwell's face was a brown blot, and again his voice was unreadable. "You see, I know one or two things that Anthony doesn't, things he wouldn't thank me to tell him as sober truth, but that I dare say he wouldn't mind having circulated. Sometimes I imagine Anthony welcomes the blasts against his reputation. He has a little of the martyr in him, I think."

"I'm interested, Mr. Hawkwell. You say you don't mind telling this to me?"

"Not in the least, but kindly keep my notions in confidence."

"I sure will."

"Pardon me, then," said the solicitor, rising. "The item in question is upstairs. I shall not be long." While he spoke, his hand fell on the papers before him, and as if casually he shifted their position, placing one on another.

"That's all right," Tom assured him eagerly. "I'd wait all afternoon."

Hawkwell went out with a slightly mincing gait. Tom slouched in his chair.

His mind, however, was alert. A few moments later he was sitting up, muttering aloud. He had fitted together the ill-lighted room, the warmed atmosphere, the last movement of Hawkwell. There was only one pattern they could make: the solicitor had been dealing with some document that he did not wish Tom even to see.

Well, he *would* see it!

He was around the table in a flash, his fingers turning over the papers rapidly. They seemed to be legal things for the most part; wax and string were attached to some. But what was beneath? What was hidden?

It was a book, a scrap-book, still open!

With not a moment to waste in peering in that dimness, he ran to the window on tip-toe, eagerly scanned one of the several clippings attached to the large page.

His breath leaped. The name DALROY CRABTREE was the first thing to catch his eye!

The clipping, frayed and yellow, yielded its message quickly. It was a contemporary account of that evil morning when Colonel Dalroy Crabtree had been trampled to death by his famous mettled stallion, Evander. Tom did not wait to finish the account before turning to another clipping—the same story over again. Another and yet another gave its version of that morning

in 1921, hinted, too, that the tragedy was but the outcome of a long course of stern "training" on the part of the master.

The American turned to a new page—more yellow clippings, much perused. Here were accounts of another calamity, when in 1923 James Mottram had received his scars. Half aghast at the vividness of the incident, Tom read Mottram's confused evidence of events that icy evening in the house on Salisbury Plain —the skulker in the shrubbery, Sir Anthony's unheeded warning, the shaggy man with the knife, the struggle and call for help, Sir Anthony's rush down the stairs, and the flight and escape of the assailant.

His eyes magnetized by the columns, Tom turned the pages one by one. Yes, as he expected, the grim roll of the perishing Veryans was complete from Whipper Snapper Anthony down to Lacey Arnott himself, the poet's brother, picked up in a Liverpool street, only a door or two away from the public mortuary. Tom did not try to estimate the number of these little leaves of death, but there must have been scores, collected by Hawkwell—for what purpose, he felt it vain to guess.

When had this culling and docketing begun? The American turned clear back to the beginning of the book. Not so long ago: 1913. The set commenced with a feature story about Roger Veryan's life on Caldy Island, another feature article dealing with the (then) late lamented Patrick, a résumé which seemed —to Tom's hastening glance—to tell more about his father, the vanished mesmerist. That Patrick, Senior, had winning ways with dumb creatures, that he kept cats and mice in a peaceful community, that his voice was the most marvelously persuasive ever known except on the stage, that under favourable circumstances he could hypnotize people by the power of voice alone— this was as much as Tom took in before fear of a returning footstep sent him hot-foot to the table to replace the scrap-book beneath the documents.

When Hawkwell entered, the American was sitting in his place.

"Here we are, here we are," said the solicitor briskly. There was a click when the chandelier cast a glaring light along the topography of the table. "That's better. You will be *particularly* careful not to divulge—"

"You bet I will," returned the American, his fingers already on the scribbled, aged sheet Hawkwell held out. "I can read this?"

"You may, if you can." Hawkwell smiled. "It is not an easy fist, you see. The ink has rusted. Perhaps I had better—"

"Yes, if you don't mind. It's all Arabic to me, but what—what is it, for crime's sake?"

Hawkwell answered in a delicate voice, "It is a letter from Terra del Fuego, dated 1881."

Tom jerked up a staying hand. "Wait! Lemme see, I ought to know that. Wait a minute." His eyes narrowed and his face clouded with a huge scowl. "I sure ought to know that. It couldn't be from Sir Anthony, of course—a lot too early. But say! It works in with Maverick, doesn't it?"

"You have guessed correctly, Mr. Stapleton."

"A letter from Maverick! Well, I'll be ossified! You knew Maverick?"

"No," corrected Hawkwell, his face crinkling a little more than was its wont, "this is not a letter from Maverick, and I did not know him. But by a pure coincidence I did know a man who met him very near the end of his life. I've been told that Maverick's letters were exceedingly few and far between, much like the correspondence of Sir Anthony himself during his absence. His agents would have been more than a little surprised if Anthony had gone beyond his usual letter of a six-month. Moreover, my friend here wrote me at a time when Maverick was past letter-writing, I should think."

"In Terra del Fuego!"

"Precisely. Having met Maverick, by an extension of this coincidence he wrote about him to me, who was yet to meet Anthony. Can you guess what my friend wrote?"

"No chance."

"Here goes, then. I'll confine myself to the essential portion.

" 'Dear Launce:

" 'This is a beastly hole and you can depend on it that J. M. is going to get out of it as soon as he can. There is nothing in trading, there is nothing in ranching, there is nothing in prospecting. This is, as I said before, a beastly hole.

" 'I am not the only one who thinks so. There is another camp a few miles beyond the village, and who should be the head-man there but old Maverick Veryan, whose name was so frequently in the press a few years ago. Well, his name is likely to be there again, if I am not mistaken, and not because of this third expedition of his. The fact is, that unless I prove a poor prophet, by the time this letter reaches you, he will be fit for the obituary column. It's cardiac.

" 'As head-man of this particular camp, I have paid him two or three state visits. He knows pretty well that he is not long for this world, and what do you think his chief care is? He wants to tear his property in two and hand part of it over to a distant relative!' "

"Zowie! He *was* going to separate Sir Anthony from some of the family plate!"

Hawkwell made no comment except a slight brightening of his eyes while he read on.

" 'Probably you know something about the unsavory reputation of his son Anthony. Just at present Maverick seems to have forgotten Anthony's good qualities and to be impressed only with his frailties, which I suppose one must admit are neither few nor small. On the other hand, you may not have even heard of Patrick Veryan, who seems to be the apple of the dying man's eye. This Patrick, hailing from Cumberland or elsewhere in the mists of the North, bids fair to be one of the young brilliants of our times. Maverick can't praise him

enough, and unless death intervenes before he is sufficiently strong to make a new will, I'll venture that young Anthony is going to pay for his follies—as they say—through the nose.

" 'By the way, I forgot to mention Patrick's forte. Provided he has the funds to promote his research, he is—Maverick declares!—going to be the Pasteur, the Lister, nay, even the Darwin of this latter generation. We shall see.' "

"I'm sunk, absolutely sunk. So Sir Anthony was in wrong after all."

"He was very lucky to defend his suit successfully against Patrick."

"That letter never came into court, I'll bet."

"What a pointed remark! But may I remind you that I did not then know Sir Anthony, not until I changed my residence to St. David's."

"Oh."

"No. The whole affair, as I pointed out, is one vast prank of chance."

"What's your theory, Mr. Hawkwell, that you base on this letter?"

"Don't say theory, I beg you—fancy, rather. Well, we know Patrick's dead for certain, but he may have had friends, may even have had an heir." The solicitor waved his hand. "Vapourings, no doubt. But the letter makes me—wonder, sometimes."

"I'm not surprised!" Tom sat back, endeavouring to keep speech separate from thought. His brain was humming with doubts. He said, "I'd take you to be a Londoner, Mr. Hawkwell. How did you come to settle here?"

Hawkwell's response seemed unreasonably slow. The man was distrait; Tom's imagination saw him as perhaps startled, even alarmed.

While the solicitor grasped for words, Tom became, as usual abashed and diffident. He, too, groped for words. "Well, I guess —I didn't mean to—"

Then came a sound that froze him, an experience more ghastly than anything heard of or encountered on Ramsey Island. Somewhere in the regions upstairs a voice cried down, cried down in speech unintelligible, speech inarticulate. It was doubtful whether that formless gibberish proceeded from the throat of man or woman.

Hawkwell was alert on the instant, his voice hasty yet collected. "You must excuse me again, Mr. Stapleton. I shall not detain you long this time either."

He was out of the room almost before that inhuman cry was done. Tom was on his feet, too, and did not deliberate, but made toward the entrance hall. Somewhere in the semi-light he discovered his hat, and stood listening with uneven breath. No sound, however, had issued from above the stairs Hawkwell had just ascended. Presently the solicitor came hastening down.

"Not leaving, Mr. Stapleton? I shall be disappointed if you don't stop for a cup of tea. I can assure you there will be no more interruptions."

Tom dared not explain his eagerness to get away. He longed to separate himself from that darksome house, from the neighbourhood of the amorphous cry, from the blasted garden, from the cloying and somehow forbidding presence of the little solicitor himself.

"I—I really—can't stay. Thanks, a lot. I have to get back to the castle, and I've got to see the curator—"

He bungled his way through his string of transparent excuses. He perspired.

Hawkwell opened the front door, still deploring. "I am sorry that you should have remembered your obligations so suddenly. Another time, perhaps, you will come? You must let me give you a dish of tea."

"Thanks a lot. Really, Mr. Hawkwell, I mustn't miss the curator today, or I'd stay, honest I would." (Anything to get away.)

"Davening?—the keeper of the Museum of the Saints, you mean?"

"Yes—yes. He's the one I mean."

Hawkwell's eyes were alive. "Poor Hilary Davening! An unfortunate life, Mr. Stapleton. I could tell you—"

Despite his inclination to flee, Tom made no movement to go. "Huh? You know all about him?"

"I could tell you something about him, yes. He was much talked of in St. David's before his descent upon us last winter. Early in life, they say, he promised well, as nipping-keen a youth as you would find in a day's travel. He was not averse to sports, was the author of a brochure, showing that he and the present Pope had at least one interest in common besides religion."

"What do you mean?"

"A little essay on rock-climbing. Davening held a record or two in the peak district. And then through a wretched accident his life was turned into a channel it was never meant for, a generation among the slums and sinks of London."

"Accident, eh? Turned his life—"

"Oh, I don't mean that he was forced to leave. But he imposed the sentence upon himself."

"I don't get the idea."

Hawkwell looked politely incredulous. "My dear sir! You have not been told the story of the stolen Gower Missal, relic of our noblest Bishop?"

"The Gower Missal? Who stole it?"

"I should hesitate to put a name to the culprit. Stolen while poor Davening was swimming, Mr. Stapleton."

"Ah, you're joking me now."

Hawkwell drew the door to and stood outside on the porticoed porch. "Solemn truth, I assure you. Davening was a famous swimmer in his early days, but once, while he was bathing in Caerfai Bay, some rascal abstracted the Missal from his clothing. Our friend had brought it with him to study while relaxing

in the sun, a little, handy book, but one of the most treasured relics in the Cathedral. It broke Davening's heart to lose it, of course. Poor chap, he hasn't recovered from the loss to this hour."

"He ought to. Gosh, I can think of lots worse things than that. Now, if I was that woman that Sir Anthony—"

Hawkwell's face became troubled. He stirred deprecatingly.

Tom stared, reading much in the silent motion. "You don't mean to say Sir Anthony denies it!"

"Oh, no, no," fluttered the solicitor. "Her allowance is liberal, most liberal—on condition she does not molest Sir Anthony or anyone else in Kestrel's Eyrie. There is—there is no other such allowance, I assure you. I meant only that we—do we not really attach too much importance to the troubles of life? Life is short, Mr. Stapleton."

And so he bowed Tom away.

The visit had served to rivet the American's suspicions on the solicitor. While he traced the walking-track down the hill in the commencement of a yellow gloaming, he strengthened in his belief.

"Why did he want to show me that letter against Sir Anthony? Pure coincidence, was it? He keeps a file of all the newspaper stuff on the Veryans. I'll bet he was—he was gloating over it when I butted in."

He recalled the voice that gurgled, and he gave a small shudder.

"He thinks we pay too much attention to the unpleasant things of life. I wonder if murder is one of 'em."

"You can see for yourselves," said Inspector Frost. "He came down more than half way in good style, but he slipped here toward the bottom and carried away part of the plant. It was a good six-foot drop. He wasn't an old hand at this game."

"No," said Hector, and although his words had something of a saturnine flavour, his eyes were clouded: "In spite of being a poet, I don't think he did much climbing about on castle walls."

"No Romeo, eh?" murmured Tom, regarding with awe he could not wholly overcome the torn-away stems of scarlet ivy which had failed to sustain Evelyn Arnott. "I don't suppose, Inspector, that just by looking at those skinned-off patches you can tell what time of night he clomb down?"

"My name is not Sherlock Holmes, nor John Thorndike, neither," bristled the little man. "It was done last night, and that's enough for me."

"At any rate," Hector put in, "he's gone, and our job is to find him."

"That depends," said Tom, and instantly could have bitten his tongue out.

"What do you mean?"

"Well, I—I just—I only meant that maybe he—he doesn't want to be found."

"And alternatively, I suppose," Frost suggested urbanely, "someone may have carried him down the wall in a sack? That hypothesis, of course, accounts for this." He pointed to the mangled ivy.

Hector knit heavy brows. "I don't quite understand *you,* Inspector. Here's the situation. Evelyn fails to come down to breakfast this morning, fails to answer when we decide to knock him

up at noon. We unlock his door and what do we find? He's taken his key, left his priceless manuscript behind him, gone—fully dressed as far as we can tell—out the window, down the ivy, eluded every last one of your blithering sentinels on the terraces, disappeared. What do you think—"

"That, if you please, I don't care to discuss. You may trust me, Bransonby, not to leave anything undone—"

Hector burst out. "Oh, trust you! That's the tune you've sung all along, and a precious lot of good it's been."

Frost turned his back sharply on the huge man and walked away without saying a word.

Hector had not exhausted his spleen. "A fine way to talk. No one's allowed even to think, it seems, without his permission! I tell you, Stapleton, the time's come when somebody else must use his wits, and extra hard, if we're going to get out of this with whole skins."

Was Tom to admit that he had been trying to do that very thing ever since coming to the castle? "I guess we'll have to leave the heavy thinking to you."

"That's only your idea of humour," declared Hector. He looked at the broken mesh of ivy and shook his head. "I'm worried about this, I don't mind telling you. Have you been in Evelyn's room?"

"I did look in a minute."

"Notice anything missing besides the man?"

"Well, I wouldn't have noticed. I wasn't acquainted—"

"Neither was Frost," confided Hector in a secret tone. "I haven't told him yet, but Evelyn did take one thing with him and one thing only. That Buddha is missing."

"That little statue!"

Hector winked. "Heavy enough to make the ivy give way. Evelyn alone lacked the beef, I think."

"By Gosh! I knew that he liked the room because the Buddha was there, but who ever heard—"

Hector winked again. "These poets. Perhaps the image got on his mind. He'd been working pretty hard, you know. Well, I'm off to report this whole thing to Sir Anthony before Frost gives instructions otherwise. Cheerio!"

Hector strode round the corner toward the entrance door.

"And I," muttered Tom, "will pore over the latest budget of instructions from the Sunbeam City Senate until I drop off. Little boys need sleep after a heavy lunch, anyway. Let the poet ride."

When Powell knocked on his door late in the afternoon, Tom awoke to see the cairn, behind which an unusually red sun was painting the skies with blood. He stretched and jumped up from the bed, upon whose covers he had lain. He had difficulty in stifling a yawn while he crossed to the door, and his whole body was sluggish, numb, and rebellious against exertion. The light which struck through the window and the doorway illumined the servant's face with a sanguine tinge.

"Inspector Frost, sir, is asking for you."

"Asking for me?"

"Yes, sir, if it's convenient. In the billiard room, sir. He's having his tea there."

"What for, for heaven's sake? Why not with the others?"

"The members of the family have had theirs in Sir Anthony's room. I, ah, happened to overhear Miss Arthura say she didn't think you ought to be called, sir."

("Taking care of me already.") He nodded dismissal. "All right, I'll be down in a shake. Oh, by the way, what's happened to my grey matter?"

"I beg your pardon, sir?"

"I mean, has Mr. Arnott, er, returned?"

"No, sir."

"Hm. Do you know if anyone has suggested—well, what do they suppose he's up to?"

"I'm sure I don't know, sir."

"Are Arthura and Sir Anthony and Mr. Robert—would you say they were disturbed?"

"I believe not, sir. I try to be, ah, what I may call discreet, sir, but it seems that they do not know Mr. Arnott very well."

"I get you the first time. The poetic temperament has been discussed?"

"I have heard it mentioned, sir."

Tom went downstairs.

The billiard room, a spacious and rather gloomy chamber fit for the cobwebs that extended in its darker corners, was not, Tom thought, a place one would have chosen for tea. The billiard table itself, of an ancient design, had squatted under its muslin cover since before the American had come to the castle. In the absence of a pendent electric light, four tall lamps with reflectors stood like skeletons at the corners to drive the shadows from the board. Along the north wall of the room, as Tom recalled it, were ranged chests and boxes supposed to contain family papers, an overflow from the dark, crowded chamber on the floor above.

The moment the American entered the room that afternoon, however, he divined the motive for the lonely tea. Inspector Frost was busy.

One of the chests gaped open; two, though the rugs that covered them had been replaced, gave evidence of having been disturbed. A stool bearing a tray at his left hand, Frost sat beside the open box. Knee-deep around him were piled pamphlets, plans, pictures, and other oddments. The detective reached down, picked up, examined, and placed on the floor what he had examined, with mechanical regularity.

Not having knocked, Tom announced himself. "At your service, Inspector."

Frost looked up, and in that instant meeting of their eyes in the room faintly dim the American realized what a change had come over the detective since their ten-minute interview early in the afternoon.

He had always thought of Frost as frail, but now when the precision of his movement was interrupted, the frailty appeared explicitly; and when he spoke, Tom thought to himself quick as a flash, "His nerve's about gone." The detective's voice had taken on more than a tinge of bitterness; it was trenchant, caustic.

His first words were an almost viperish snarl. "Be sure you don't mean the opposite."

"I—why—"

"Aren't you one of those here who knows more about this case than I do?" asked Frost mordantly, his hands on his knees, his eyes glittering.

Tom lifted himself to the billiard table and crossed his legs. "Honest to tripe, Inspector, I meant 'at your service' when I said it. Let me—"

"Well, you shall have a chance to prove it. And for a beginning, please know that you're not taking the orders of a nincompoop."

"Say, Inspector, you don't mean—"

Frost's eyes, Tom thought, had the baleful sparkle of a snake's, though to be sure, the American had never studied snakes' eyes at close quarters.

"Are you sure, Stapleton, you're not one of the ever-present, omnipresent critics, one of the multitude of self-appointed jeerers?"

("Great day! his fur's up, all right.")

The pale little man persisted. "Not one of the throng of obliging tipsters? The police are always much obliged to tipsters," Frost jerked out.

Tom began to feel like a goaded beast. His head thrust out;

his chin jutted. "All right," he snapped, "I'll give you a good tip, then. What about Hawkwell? Have you ever given a thought to him?"

"Hawkwell? I suppose you are serious, Stapleton?"

Each stinging sentence drove the American on. Things pent up in him became a flood; the whole apparatus of suspicion began to stir. He poured forth an account, citing his observations, intuitions, deductions of the night before and of other nights. There was Hawkwell's apparent guarantee of Norshire; there was the hidden scrap-book with its sinister contents; there was the baffling cry from the upper reaches of the darkened house—and, while the fever burned high, there was the house itself, sour and dismal, set in its gloomy garden like a mansion out of Edgar Allan Poe.

He was almost gasping when he concluded. "I don't care what you say, but there's something fishy about the man. He—he gets on my nerves. He's too damn slick, too patronizing, too affable, too much molasses. He's a—a sugar plum." Now he had to pause for breath.

Frost waited a long moment before he answered, and his words were partly an echo. "A sugar plum, who lives in a gloomy house and who is, therefore, of course, a murderer."

He gave a sharp laugh, the only time Tom remembered hearing him laugh. "I'll give *you* a tip about Hawkwell, Stapleton; then perhaps you can sleep tonight without dreaming evil dreams about him. Hawkwell, of all men to suspect! Why, the man's life has been a ladder of sacrifice."

All Tom's blood seemed to be crowding the channels to his heart. "Why—why—" he commenced weakly, gazing at Frost; his voice died away.

"He's an Englishman, you know," said the other; "nothing to do with the Welsh of these parts. He has a sister who's subject to some affliction—mental—and he's buried himself down here on her account. It wasn't so at first. Fifteen or twenty years

ago he expected there might be a place for her in the little religious community here. There are usually some Anglican nuns connected with the Cathedral. But her trouble's been too severe, and Hawkwell has stayed on and on, devoting himself to her. That's the man you associate with these murders, is it, Stapleton?" He seemed to throw Tom's suspicions over his shoulder like a bit of dirt.

"But the scrap-book," Tom insisted. "You can't explain that away, Inspector. He was looking at it when—"

"*You've* never felt any interest in the Veryans, have you, Stapleton?" The American thought of the many times he had bragged about his knowledge of the family history, and a flame commenced to rise in his face. "Must you alone be permitted to browse in their annals? . . . That high-walled garden, too," mused Frost, while Tom's face grew hotter. "Poor Hawkwell's wind-swept garden. Of course things won't grow there, where the very soil is almost blown away. Still, there's the high wall, of course—very suspicious, that. I told you of Hawkwell's sister, didn't I? They don't like to imprison her in the house, and sometimes during her spells it is necessary to keep her from roaming away. Then the walls are very useful."

All the blood was rushing into Tom's head now, making him giddy. "Well," he choked, while his voice seemed less loud than the ringing in his ears, "I suppose I got the idea and then just let it ride me to death. The Hawkwell atmosphere was just as—as potent as the Veryan atmosphere, only different."

"I dare say your guesswork commenced with the vague feeling of dislike and uneasiness you acquired," commented Frost. "Thereafter, of course, every circumstance about the man struck you unfavourably."

"Yes, everything seemed to jibe," admitted Tom.

"Hawkwell!" cried Frost again, unable to desist. "Why, it would be as foolish as suspecting *you*—now!"

"Me? Now? You don't mean—"

"Are you sure you credit the police with enough—acumen? Sometimes a road that seems a dead end leads us out of our difficulties. We must investigate every one even remotely connected with the victim of a crime. That's elementary."

Tom gulped. "Holy smoke! You overstrained yourself, didn't you? I only landed at Plymouth the morning before the attack on Sir Anthony and Crabtree."

"We had to be very sure of you, Stapleton. There was 1925, you remember."

Tom stared. "You never got the idea that I had anything to do with *that?*"

"Standish Nicholson was murdered about the time you left England two years ago."

"Yes, but gee whiz, Inspector, I left before."

"So you did, so you did. Keep the wool on, Stapleton. It was routine. More than one may be concerned in a crime. We had to satisfy ourselves."

"Yes, you satisfied yourself so well you camped on my trail when I got back."

Frost shrugged. "This is a very dark affair. Assurance doubly sure, and all that sort of thing. In fact—if you are vain you may be pleased to learn this—I devoted an extra day to you myself this time. That was how we happened to come down here on the train together. All was innocence, I am glad to say now."

Tom laughed, but the sound emerged as a nervous whinny. "Me, too. I wish you had let me know up in town. I could have saved you a lot of trouble by telling you you were barking up the wrong tree."

Then he murmured, more to himself than to the other, "Gol ding it and little codfish! Shadowed me in London, eh? I never thought—"

He blinked at Frost's next words, they came so sudden and so fierce. "Have you ever done any real thinking about this case?"

"I'll say I have."

The detective leaped to his feet, upset a tower of papers into a pyramid, strode the length of the room, to the rack of cues and markers. "What do you think of this? There's no point of vantage outside Sir Anthony's window."

Tom's brows contracted. "What do you mean?"

"What I say. There's no place on the opposite cliff where a man could stand, day or night, and see Sir Anthony's black door through the window. The escarpment isn't high enough across the inlet from the window. What follows, Stapleton?"

"I—I don't quite get you, Inspector. But say—yes, I do! If nobody could see it from there, nobody could have known that the black door was Sir Anthony's."

"Which, in turn, suggests that it was no outsider who turned that knob two years ago. And yet the force which was in operation was from outside. It must be." Wheeling, Frost barked. "How would you cross the sound, if you hadn't a boat?"

"I'd swim, only I can't swim that far."

"Well enough. Our minds work the same way, I perceive. Yes, yes, it can be done. It's feasible, certainly, and to a determined man getting in the castle itself would not be impossible—not if he had night after night to make the attempt."

"Then you think—"

"How would you explain the two sets of footprints leading from the farm to the castle and back again the night of June 2?"

Tom was dazed, but managed to utter, "You found footprints like that?"

"Bransonby found them. Two sets of tracks, Stapleton, apparently made by the same intruder!" Frost's hands fell to his sides. "Unfortunately, they were too vague to be matched with anyone's. The fellow had evidently been at some pains to disguise them and slosh about. There you are; neither Crabtree

nor Sir Anthony could explain 'em, unless they belonged to the attacker."

There was no sound in the dim room except the slight creak of Frost's footsteps.

Presently the detective snarled again, "How did Crabtree die, do you suppose? He was poisoned, Stapleton; did you know that? That's the reason for the adjourned inquest."

Tom's "Poisoned?" was a gasp that almost failed.

"Poisoned the night you arrived, my friend, by something that took him off quietly while he slept, as if his strength had slipped away."

Though his mind fought against Frost's idea with all the power it possessed, nevertheless Tom had the pluck to rejoin, "That doesn't quite fit in with your 'outside' theory, does it?"

"They may have tools and instruments inside," answered Frost. "What about Robert Veryan, Stapleton? (Just take a peep out the door, will you? No one? Thank you.) Did Robert Veryan order those pamphlets himself, do you think?"

Striving not to fall behind the detective in his race from topic to topic, Tom summoned up a fairly emphatic "No."

"Nor do I."

"Thinking alike again, you see," muttered Tom, with a faint pretense of lightness.

Frost seemed to take umbrage at this preening. His next question was yet more pungent in tone. "Who did, then?"

"Darned if I know."

Frost came to a stand at last, breathing loudly enough for Tom to hear his breath. Tom stared at the little man, a faint wraith of alarm gathering out of the cloudiness of his mind. Could there be something wrong with the detective? The American's eyes turned quickly to the tray: nothing thereon except an innocent tea-cup. His glance flicked back.

Frost was regarding him sardonically. "Well?"

"Well, we found him sleeping with 'em out there."

"So he was found."

"Yes," assented Tom, and ventured, "during your absence, Inspector."

Frost gave a mighty shrug for such small shoulders. "Where was I, I suppose you'd like to know?"

"I wouldn't mind knowing, I admit."

"Why shouldn't you?" said Frost, moving to the window now wholly darkened by the shadow of the cairn. "I was—why, I was within earshot of the Long Corridor."

"You still like conundrums, I see."

"Don't you understand?" Frost moved away from the casement and resumed his tramp. "I was in the windowless chamber, of course."

"In there!"

"In there, where I had been spending the most of the two days previous with a dark lantern, overhauling and sorting out the diverse Veryan material. It was as stuffy a job as you could ask for. This is the overflow from that place; probably you know."

Tom, his hands clasped on the knee thrown over the corner of the billiard table, gave a muted chuckle. "So that's where people disappear? You haven't been looking for Evelyn there, have you? But I forgot; he went out the window, didn't he?"

The brisk tread ceased. In the semi-gloaming of that room whose window was shadowed by the cairn, Frost's face held an incredulity so great that he looked comical; or was that an expression of anguish that had suddenly seized his features?

"You believe—you believe—?" Again his breath was audible. "You believe that?"

"Do I believe he's gone? He hasn't come back yet, has he?"

Frost's voice was on the ragged edge of huskiness. "Do you *believe* that Arnott went down the ivy?"

"I—why—don't you?"

"Why should he?" returned the little man, getting hold of his voice again. "There were the stairs, weren't there?"

"Good gosh! You think—then why—?"

"Yes, Stapleton, you tell me why he took the trouble to meddle with the plant." Tom was surprised to see the detective whisk the handkerchief from his breast pocket and apply it earnestly to his brow.

The American leaned forward. "I don't quite get you. Am I right, or haven't you some idea about when Arnott's coming back?"

There was no doubt that this question impinged upon a nerve that thrilled with pain.

"Coming back," muttered Frost. He seemed awed. "Yes, he may be coming back, but *how* is he coming back? Will he come back alone, or with half the countryside behind him? An instrument," he added moodily to himself. "I told you, didn't I, that there might be an instrument within?"

Tom came to his feet from the billiard table with a thump. He strove to read irony, levity, carelessness, in that small dark face. He could distinguish nothing but a hard and hopeless disgust.

"Haven't I told you?" insisted Frost. "The force that is in operation is from the outside. There's plenty of proof of that. I'm getting closer to it, Stapleton, but I haven't been able to grasp it. There's a bigness about it that baffles me. But we've got to paralyze it before it gets *us!* Now you know as much as I do. Go and arrest the proper parties."

He turned on his heel and strode to the window again where his slight silhouette showed against the crimson-green waters of the sound.

Tom was beside him in a moment, hand on shoulder. "What the ding ding do you mean, Inspector? You said that as if you meant it."

Frost glared upward. "Well?"

"You look pretty sick, Inspector. Hadn't you better lay off the excitement and take a rest?"

"Take a rest, when the people in here may be bowled down like skittles? Sick! I've wondered sometimes in the last few days whether Sir Anthony knew, or whether he had forgotten. when he placed all these data at my disposal. It's—it's a terrible indictment of the man he was. It gives him away most damnably. Why, taken in common with the stories I've pried out of the villagers these last two weeks—"

Tom's heart gave a twinge. "All that old stuff, you mean?"

"All the old rumours, the old wrongs, the old scandals—they come to life in there," said Frost, nodding his head toward the chests against the wall. "No wonder the countryside seethed. The name 'Veryan' must have been like oil thrown in the flames hereabouts. . . . Well, Stapleton, I'm not surprised that there are flames still, are you?"

"My God!"

The silence dragged, with only the sound of Tom's drumming fingers to fill it.

When Frost spoke again his tone was almost broken. "What can I believe? How am I to know? What can I do? Even these constables—they might be wooden posts."

"You think one of them may be in the thing?"

"Supposing the whole lot are in it!"

"The whole bunch? Murder!"

"None of 'em would admit seeing Arnott, and how much chance did he have of getting away without being observed? Suspecting all is no worse than suspecting one. They're mostly from this corner of Pembrokeshire; hardly one of them but his father had some good grudge against the Veryans. Somehow, after reading this stuff I can hardly blame them. Only a few of this lot, trustworthy men, will be inside the castle tonight; that I promise you. I'll probably want new pickets, Stapleton. That's why I sent for you, you know."

"What am I supposed to do? Say the word, Inspector."

"Go to St. David's, to Hawkwell's, and if necessary, telephone a certain message—"

"But why—when you've got a perfectly good telephone right here?"

Frost snorted. "For all we know, Stapleton, the switchboard operator in St. David's may have the heaviest grudge against these—prisoners here. Don't you see? There's hardly a soul we can trust in this neighbourhood except English people. Not that I blame the Welsh," he added under his breath. "Besides, if this wire were cut—"

"Excuse me for saying anything. I'll keep still as a clam. Now what are the orders?"

Frost took out his wallet, extracted a piece of paper, and handed it to Tom. "Take this. Be at Hawkwell's tonight from seven o'clock on. They'll give you some food. Expect a call from me, but in any case ring up the castle from hour to hour. I expect to give you instructions, but in case the line goes dead or you can't get through, don't be surprised—just get these code words through to Swansea and if there's any hitch, don't hesitate, but *get the words there,* if you have to carry them there yourself."

"Right! You can trust me, Inspector. You'll see me back here before Evelyn Arnott."

"Don't come back," said Frost decisively.

"What!"

"I said don't come back; stay on in the City. I want you there."

"You want me there?" cried Tom, his temperature rising five degrees. "There's going to be danger here, and you can bet your last simoleon I'm coming to see what it is. Why, Arthura—"

"We'll take care of Miss Veryan," said Frost, laying his hand on Tom's sleeve. "I want you there, secretly. Keep an eye peeled."

"But what's the good of talking about secrecy when I've got to cross—"

"As a matter of fact, when you visit Hawkwell's, I don't want you to go by way of Porth 'Stinian; go to some landing-place south of the City. After you have sent that message through, if it must go through, don't let yourself be seen as you enter the town. Do what you think best while you are there, visit the inn, the police station, anywhere; be quiet, and notice what goes on. Keep an eye peeled and an ear alert. If you come across any news of Arnott, just be mildly interested. It isn't given out that he's decamped. That's all I can say."

"All right, then," muttered the American. "You're the say-so man. But be careful, that's all; be careful."

Frost had seated himself again beside the opened chest. He had lit the wick of the dark lantern which presumably he had used in the chamber above; now he waited until it should be fully alight that he might resume his search among the embalmed memories of earlier days.

"I'm trusting you, Stapleton. Do the same for me."

He stooped over the chest again.

An hour later Tom stood alone with Arthura at the top of the winding stair.

"Don't forget our signals, dearest. Green above red steady if everything's all right, red alone if there's any strong danger, and red above green if you just feel sort of—as if you'd feel better with me around."

"Yes, Thomas, but you mustn't expect to see any such signal as that. You see, Thomas, having you here is really rather—disconcerting."

Tom encompassed her hand. "Darling! It is? You mean it?"

"Oh, Tom, not quite so vigorously. Yes, I was going to tell you about yesterday afternoon."

"Yest—What do you mean?"

"Why, it was quite late, after we had come back from Aber Mawr. I persuaded Uncle Anthony to walk awhile on the Jericho Terrace. We went round the three sides of the castle for half an hour."

"That must have been before I went back to your tower to write my letter."

"Yes, you weren't in the tower, but when we passed under Evelyn's window, we could hear his typewriter tick-tocking. Imagine a poet with a typewriter! It turned chilly for Uncle Anthony while we were out there, and I came in for a moment to fetch his cloak. Oh, Tom, I nearly gave *us* away! There was your coat hanging next to his in the antechamber, and I almost took it off the hook and carried it out to him!"

"Darling! That would have given him the low-down, wouldn't it?"

"Yes, and then I almost made up my mind to tell him anyhow. Why shouldn't I? But I don't want to, quite."

"Not tonight, dearest; when the poet's back and everything's O.K. . . . Well-l, you're sure you've got the wax paper to fit over the shade?"

"Yes, dear, I found it a few days ago in the Refectory cabinet. That's why I suggested red and green."

"Well, it'll do me good to see the green above red, anyhow, and to know that you're where the light is." He gazed up at Arthura's tower, wherein a window was pierced toward the City. "While I see 'em burning I'll know you're safe. Well, darling, I think—"

He stirred as if they were to speak no more, but spoke again, rather breathlessly.

"Dearest, I've been wondering—but I can't figure it out at all. Are we—are we really engaged?"

Arthura's lips parted; her eyes lit, but they looked everywhere except in Tom's. "I—I was going to ask you, Tom. You haven't mentioned the subject so directly before."

"I'm asking you now, darling."

"Is it—necessary? Yes, Thomas, dear, I hope we are."

His hands crushing hers, he cried out delightedly. "It's unanimous, then! Gee, I'm glad! I wanted to hear you say that." Then he fell suddenly abashed. "Gosh, we'll be a lop-sided pair. I'm a hobo alongside you."

"Indeed not! Why, Thomas, you have a degree from college."

"Yes, but what's that in America? Never mind, darling; we'll have lots of fun together."

"Yes, endless fun, Tom."

A little later: "You'll absolutely take care of yourself, now —stay in the tower—"

"Silly Thomas. Are you the only one who knows how to protect people?"

"You don't see any muscular development around my temples, do you? I'm not swelled-headed about it. But the feeling's natural; that's all."

"Of course it is, and I love you for it, Thomas. Now you must go; it will be dark when you reach Caerfai Bay."

Reluctantly, even forebodingly, he left her. When, in the launch manned by Powell, less talkative than Charon, he had an hour to think, he almost yelled aloud:

"Arnott! Was there ever an unlikelier tool in a business like this?"

A little later, rounding the southern point of the mainland, it struck him what strange behaviour Frost had exhibited. Where was the English reserve, aloofness, discretion? Suddenly the American realized that Inspector Evan Frost of Scotland Yard had given a thoroughly un-English demonstration of nerves.

"And by jiminy, haven't I heard that 'Evan' is a Welsh name! Curiouser and curiouser!"

XVIII. Enemy's Country: Red Above Green

PAUSING for breath at the top of the steep ascent from purple-walled Caerfai Bay, he was surprised to see how much light remained. Kestrel's Eyrie was almost invisible in the shadow of the cairn, but across the mainland moors the ruddy light lay gleaming. Less than a mile north, over that gentle heave of the hill, the dirt road reached St. David's, and between Tom and the City the pale of Hawkwell's garden loomed a little to the west.

The American skirted the coast for a way, past St. Non's Well and the nearby chapel of St. David's mother, before turning to the right and up the declivity within sight of River Alan. Though Tom's fancies about Hawkwell were forever dispelled, nothing could induce him to change his mind about the solicitor's garden, and he passed among the wind-smitten borders at a hurried shuffle.

His knock summoned an old rickety English servant as furrowed as Hawkwell himself.

"Master won't be down, sir—Miss Em'ly's very bad tonight —but you are expected and welcome to sit in the sittin' room with the telephone."

"Oh, I get you. Tell Mr. Hawkwell I'm sorry not to see him."

Ushered into a small study adjoining the room of yesterday, Tom found himself sitting alone in gradually greater gloom, for Hawkwell's western wall intercepted the remaining sun. There came to the American no stir or sound of life from any part of the house.

He had not been there twenty minutes before the vigil palled.

He had tried to decipher the names of the books in the cases opposite him, things of the 90's mainly; they couldn't be read now without some light better than the paper of wax vestas in his waistcoat pocket, and in that old-fashioned room the electric switch was hidden where he couldn't find it. He felt hesitant about looking for the servant, who seemed to have disappeared into some soundless region.

Soon it was too dark to read even the titles. The casement was fading into the general vagueness. The telephone, resting where his elbow almost touched it, flickered in and out of his vision like some black fowl with gaping beak.

Presently, when there still was no smallest sound from any part of the house, Tom rose and softly paced the little room, three steps back and forth. He hated the vigil. He seemed to have been forgotten by the others in the house.

It made it worse to think of Hawkwell up above caring for that hopeless sister. It made it worse to think of the servant somewhere else never shutting a door or rattling a dish. The telephone there, silent, alarmed him; he awaited with increasing tension the inevitable sharp clangour of the bell. The slow, persistent, soundless welling of the dark oppressed him, and presently out of these trifles sprang a great fear stabbing him with a thousand javelins.

He groped for his hat on the table, crept half-blindly to the entrance door, slid with infinite caution into the open, and fled through the doomed garden.

Under the twilight sky in the stirred air (he found a breeze bristling) his undefined presentiment abated somewhat; his resolution remained to avoid the house, which when he looked back showed not a light. There would be places elsewhere from which to get in touch with Frost just as well. But first he had another errand.

He slipped into the village, finding it, so he thought, unusually deserted. He walked rapidly down the High Street, branching

into that where hung the familiar sign of the Bishop's Castle Inn. About its door were clustered a few of those starved-looking motors he had observed on the night of his first arrival in the City. He stood in the entrance, peering through the inner door; in the taproom a gas-jet high on the wall flared down upon emptiness.

He was hesitating when a step scrunched behind him and a large spare youth crowded past him toward the inner room. He felt a great relief when he recognized Half-west.

"Come outside a minute," he whispered, detaining the reporter by the sleeve.

Half-west emitted a suppressed snort of greeting and followed Tom to the doorway.

"This place is as lively as a well-regulated cemetery," said the American. "Have all the folks gone out of town for the weekend, or what?" It required all his will to keep anxiety from bursting through his adopted calm.

Half-west answered with an eager question. "Do you know anything?" The idea of a scoop was transparent in his words.

"I should say not—not for publication," scowled Tom. "I'm here to get some facts. Where is everybody?"

"Having supper, I suppose."

"That's an old stall. You mean to say they're all here in town?"

"Wel-l, I did see a few—"

"Where? where?"

"I went down to Porth 'Stinian a while ago on the off-chance of anything turning up—just left my car in the Cross Square. There were some natives hanging about the shore—more going along the road in that general direction. It's a sort of rallying-place out there now."

"How did they seem? Excited?"

"Why—I don't know. Haven't they some right to be excited? But what—"

"Never mind what. Say, will you lend me that jitney of yours if I need it?"

"Jit—oh, my car, you mean? Certainly. But what's—?"

"You'll be the first in on it if there's anything to be in on," Tom growled, making past the reporter. "Good night."

Half-west did not attempt to answer while he stared after the American in the dusky street.

Though a pain took root in Tom's heart while he hurried toward the Cathedral, he noticed many things. When he reached the outskirts of the City, on the rim of the vale wherein River Alan flowed through the Cathedral Close, even in his headlong haste his mind paused for a moment. Beyond the vale the moors stretched to the sea and to those great northern hills—lonely as life itself—that hid the dead Metropolis. All the land was swathed in dark grey dusk, though in the heavens some brighter light was lingering. The grey-blue tent of cloud was warmed to pink near the western horizon by rays that reached across the sky to glimmer on eastern clouds as well.

Beneath this tinted canopy the Cathedral revealed tones more sombre than the sky's. Purple nave and dwarf towers of the western wall looked darker than they really were, beside the hoar, weather-beaten wall of transept and stately central tower, in whose lancet windows a stray sunbeam still glinted roses.

He saw the beauty of it, and rebelled against it, while he dropped down the Thirty-Nine Articles (so the steps were called) into the churchyard and so along the path to the South Porch. A faint flush lightened the upper windows of the Choir, cheering him, for it was evidence of a late Evensong. While he swung down the path amidst the headstones, he collided with a man rushing toward the Thirty-Nine Articles.

"Pardon."

"Excuse me. Oh, it's you, is it?"

"Who's that?" said the other, a mere youth, returning dubiously. "Why, it's the American from the castle!"

"That's right. But what's happened?" Tom's voice held irony. "Haven't given up your religion, have you?"

"I haven't taken it up yet," responded Keverne. "I'm just getting home from a patient up the valley." A sudden hardness in his tone: "But that old—that old sinner out there is enough to drive any man to religion—to—Shintoism and Sun-Worship."

"Old sinner? What do you mean?"

"His blood, man, his blood!" cried Keverne, in a voice so loud that one might have expected the worshippers in the fane to emerge in alarm. "The normality of his blood: it's a miracle."

"A miracle? What do you—?"

"It's absolutely incomprehensible; that's what I mean by a miracle. . . . That last sample of Clegyrn's has ruined my thesis," he tailed off miserably.

Tom thought he had never seen anyone so vexed as this young physician gesticulating in the twilight.

"Well, why shouldn't it be normal? I'm darned glad it is. I'm getting tired of hearing this and that about Sir Anthony. Serves you right for dabbling with his blood, what I say."

But Keverne was not silenced. "You don't get the point," he declared in a suppressed scream. "As I said before, how often do you find a man with a normal blood count after a terrific hæmorrhage like Sir Anthony had? It was a thousand times a thousand to one he had polycythæmia. And now here it's two weeks later and his blood count is *still* normal!"

"Listen, man," said Tom with an allaying flap of his hands. "I haven't any time to stop here and argue with you, but put this in your clay and smoke it. Maybe this thesis you're bawling about would be called scientific in these parts, but it seems to me you've overlooked one of the variables, and a mighty big one."

Even in the obscurity Tom thought he saw Keverne stare;

certainly he heard him gasp. "What—what do you mean?"

"How in the name of wonderful do you know it *is* Sir Anthony's blood? I may have him all wrong, of course, but I'd like to see the man who could collect enough of it for a test against his will."

"Ah-h! You think—"

"No, you do that. Just keep my little suggestion in mind and see how it clarifies everything. But I may be wrong, you know."

His heel scattered the gravel; he left Young Wrathful to his meditations. "I hate to think what will happen to Clegyrn if that fledgling decides he has a grudge against him."

Very gently he pressed against the inner, swinging door of the South Porch, stepped across the footboard, and stood in the darkened Nave, listening. The faint drone of voices from the choir, whence swords of light broke through the screen, showed that the service was not done. Tiptoe he stole from leaning pillar to pillar, glided softly up the sloping nave, until Gower's tomb barred his way.

He knew his course here well, for during the past two weeks he had not neglected to visit this magnificent Cathedral more than once. To his left, within one of the gigantic pillars of the central tower, was the winding stair he sought. Softly he slipped past the bands of light which might betray him, bound for the safe darkness at the other end of the screen, felt for a handle, grasped it. A light click was all the sound before he found his way within and commenced the long climb, stooping low, his elbows squeezed against his sides, yet brushing the powdery stone.

This was in sheer darkness, and when he had wound a certain way, he struck one of his paper of matches for a guide. A little higher the stairs ended and he had to traverse a long narrow gallery from north to south above the screen. Still lighting vestas, he made his arduous way, pausing a second for a rest and a look down through one of the slots in the masonry at the worshippers in the choir. There were but four in the stalls, members of the

Anglican Sisterhood, uniformed in blue. They responded to the voice of a small, bald, square-shouldered canon, who read the service through glasses held six inches from his eyes.

The murmurs were so vague that he could not tell how far the service had proceeded, but with the devout hope that it had not been going too long, he resumed his way. At the other end of the passage the stairs wormed upward through one of the southern piers. A match enabled him to take care just in time to prevent crushing a pigeon's egg lying in a flat straw nest on the floor. Then upward he went, burrowing round and round until he reached a door. Passing through, he stood in a chamber where sound throbbed in regular recurrent beats, a sound as of a small hammer striking on metal: the ticking of St. David's three-faced clock.

He groped through the darkness until he found the unrailed wooden stair leading to the roof. Bending, he climbed on hands and feet until, groping upward, he found the trap door, unlatched it, and was readmitted into the night.

The windy air smote him with a whoop while he raised himself to his feet and advanced toward the balustrade.

Night had come complete; even over the sea, and in the western sky beyond the cairns appeared no bended ray. He swept the moors, the dark masses of castellated rock, the headlands; he fixed his glance through the one distant cleft that admitted a view of the castle from the tower by day. He drilled the darkness for the gleam where Arthura's Tower must be.

"God! It was a hunch!" he cried. Infinitesimal red sparkled above infinitesimal green.

"I've got to get back, and gosh, it may not be easy!"

A second later he had left the soaring wind again for the musty closeness of the ticking room. In his forgetful haste he rushed full tilt against the rod which extended from the mechanism to one of the faces of the clock. He did not feel the bruise.

The tortuous stairs that had been there for centuries seemed

built to impede his way. He crushed through the passage above the screen to find the head of the second spiral descent. While he emerged from the nave, the worshippers were coming from the choir, but he fled from them down the aisle like a black spirit and through the Porch.

It was a stiff ascent by the graveyard path and up the Thirty-Nine Articles, across the slope that led to the Cross Square. The place was deserted. Half-west's rawboned, loose-jointed motor gave a creaking groan when Tom leaped on the running board and so into the driver's seat. In no time, disregarding the traffic rules of the little market place, he had dashed down Goat Street, which led directly into the vale of Alan. The Dean's house, the corner of the cemetery, the Chanter's orchard, were passed too fleetly for conception, but while the slight lift in the roadway before the bridge came on apace, the furious chauffeur remembered who lived in the little gate-house on the left.

"Is it worth while? Well, here goes."

He brought the rampant car to rest, catapulted himself into the roadway, and visited the dark green door. He saw that a card had been fastened in the panel behind the glass, and lighting his final vesta he read the hurried message:

"Gone to Haverfordwest. Shall return tomorrow."

"Humph!"

In no time the American was back at the wheel and on his slant way up the opposite bank of the vale. Moaning, fizzing, crashing, roaring, the car reached the summit in high gear and commenced to wind its way between the high-walled fields.

The night air whistled by while images arose in his mind, fight against them as he would. God! If anything had happened —they would both miss her unutterably. He remembered the many late signs of affection between Arthura and Sir Anthony. There was the working on the Evidences with papers spread out on the bed-foot and on the floor—and the playing on the bal-

cony at night while the old man's eyes followed her fingers—even what she had told him of today, the walking together upon the terrace and how she had fetched the old man's coat.

Now, while these images were storming in his brain, and fear surged in his heart, a dim purpose formed, strengthened as he rushed past the starlit wastes.

"It may mean something—it may be—" While he approached the lonely cottage of Trefeidden Moor, he made a great resolve.

To bring them together! He felt again the thrill he had experienced when first he had passed along this road. "She waits for him, and he waits for the big smash." Was there between these two, who had not met each other face to face for twenty years, still some invisible bond? Did some truce subsist between them? Or was the bare mile between cottage and castle but an infinitesimal symbol of the universe between their hearts?

To bring them together! From that meeting sparks might fly, a blaze leap up, revealing what had been hid before. Perhaps so; perhaps not. It was a hunch, anyhow. It was worth a run.

"If she won't come—well, that will be something learned, too."

With a jerk and a shuddering gasp of the engine that had an ominous finality, he brought the car to a halt outside the cottage, alighted and (before his intention cooled) rattled the knocker on the door.

The door receded and the Flemish woman stood before him. Behind her in the room which comprised almost the entire building, he saw the plain oil lamp with its green glass shade, and the hearth before whose fireless depths the three-pawed cat sat with folded paws, as if for warmth. The woman herself regarded him expectantly. He read in that look something beyond surprise: was it anticipation?

"I've come to take you to the castle," he said. Had he waited to think he could not have said anything half so direct or half so effective.

"To the castle?" she repeated, and it seemed as if her eyes must burn him through. "I—I have never been at the castle." That voice, which must once have been the sweetest in the world!

He sustained his brazen effrontery by refusing to think of consequences. "No, but you're coming tonight. This is the time you keep—that date of yours." He gestured toward the tall candle, new-lit, whose flame glittered like ice against the window pane. "I've come to, er, fetch you. There's no time to waste."

The slightest movement of her throat betrayed her feeling. She asked quickly, "Do you mean—that *he*—has something happened?"

"Great day, I don't know! We're going to find out." His own feeling mastered him now. "Are you coming? I've got to—get there—can't wait—"

He broke off, short of breath, his eyes unwilling to find hers, and for long moments there was silence between them. When at last he looked up, wondering that she did not answer, he could not read the play of emotion in her face. Something stirred her deeply. He waited long, while she remained voiceless, with her hand resting firmly on the table, her head thrown back, eyes closed, a gleam, whether of joy or wonder or triumph, he could not tell, giving a hint of the pristine beauty of that face. Then—he hardly dared to break the spell the words—she said with superb control, "I'm coming."

He stood on the threshold a moment while she took down her long, hooded mantle. He saw but vaguely the rows of jugs and plates that lined the dresser, its painted canisters, the delicate fronds of maidenhair fern in its pot on the woolwork mat.

His eyes wandered over the brass candlesticks, over the patchwork cushions on the horsehair couch, over the stiff-backed wooden chairs by the fireplace, over the porcelain dogs on the mantelshelf itself. Suddenly he saw a picture above the fireplace. There was no reason why he should have been surprised, but it

made him start. It was an oil portrait of a young man in his prime.

"Phew! That's Sir Anthony, all right."

The woman looked at Tom sharply, then at the picture, then back at Tom.

"He's little enough like that now."

The American's voice rose a little in antagonism. "He's had lots of trouble since—" he gestured toward the picture—"then."

"Yes, and more to come."

"You say that as if you liked it."

She looked at him keenly. "Young man, I have seen him riding by in his fine carriage—then in his motors—never a word for me, never a look. Do I owe him anything in love?"

Bubbling anger rose in Tom at her self-sufficiency. "That's why your brow's so clear. You knew you were better than he was all the time."

"I don't know how to forget," she said. "I think you were in a hurry a moment ago."

For a glorious half minute Tom lost his head utterly. His back to the door, he confronted her, and cried out, not in the least abashed, "You're a fine one to talk! I don't know what's your idea in settling down here, right on Sir Anthony's door-sill, and I don't care. It seems to me that you are enjoying his hard luck a darned sight more than's healthy. I'll pass that by, too. This is my night for hunches. A million to a monkey, you had an offspring. He is the man!"

"I never had a child. Are you answered?"

It was a curious fact; but he turned and went forth without a word.

She had locked the door and taken her place beside him before either spoke again. Then he asked, "You don't mind if I drive fast?"

"Drive as you like, young man."

Stinging under the "young man" he racked the car to its utmost, dashing along the rock-hedges toward the craggy eminences

before the last descent to the sea. In one or two of the white-washed buildings sheltered by these barriers appeared lights. Past these dashed the car, and on, and down the last stretch of road to St. Justinian's chapel where the brakes screamed for the last time and the machine came to a halt.

His own gaze was first of all at the distant castle where the red light above the green indubitably sparkled, then at the line of the nearby cliffs of Porth 'Stinian. How few people were there! The American could hardly see a dozen dark forms that in twos and threes stood lingering at the head of the steps or passed along the brink, staring across the sound.

Tom helped the Flemish woman to alight. "Gee whiz, I certainly expected more folks to be here. Why, Half-west—that's a lad I know—told me that he found slues of them coming this way."

"What do you mean? Many people?"

"Yes, that's right. Where are they? You don't suppose—you don't suppose they've gone over to the castle?"

"Indeed not! Why should they? They were going to chapel, most likely."

"What? Going to church, out here?"

"Yes, there's a chapel close to Rhosson under the rock."

He gave a shaky laugh. "Well! If that's so, it's a load off my mind, I can tell you. And now we've got to find a way across."

"Is there no boat here from the castle?"

"No, they aren't expecting us, you know."

"Not even you?"

"Not even me, but we're going just the same."

The woman had been looking intently at the figures on the cliff. "I know that man there," she said, pointing at one who had but that moment paused to light his pipe. In the ruddy flare Tom recognized one of the boatmen whose lobster-hunting craft were moored at Porth 'Stinian.

"Will he take us, d'you think?"

"Sure to," she answered. "Leave it to me."

"Am I taking her, or am I being taken?" he asked himself while the Flemish woman left him and spoke to the lobsterman.

A minute later she returned. "It is arranged. Thomas Thomas will take us across, if you will pay him well."

"Fine. That's fair enough. But what's 'well'?"

"Can you pay a pound for each of us?"

"Criminy! He's a business man, all right. It's worth it, though."

They commenced feeling their way down the steps which led to the lifeboat platform. Thomas Thomas, a decidedly phlegmatic Welshman, was ready for them at the foot of the runway. And soon they were adventuring in the channel.

In the stress of the last half-hour Tom had forgotten the wind, which had already risen sufficiently to make the waters choppier than he had experienced them before. The lobsterman's craft, too, was smaller than the launch belonging to the castle, and not so well trimmed. The consequence was that the swell from the darkness ahead toyed with the boat as if it was a piece of bark.

It was a breathless, speechless voyage. In the stern the lobsterman held a lantern over his engine with one hand, bailed underneath with the other, and managed to steer also. The Flemish woman, almost invisible in her dark cloak, sat opposite the American in the bows.

Clouds blown in from the sea now possessed the sky, strangling the last starlight. Save for the glow of the lobsterman's lantern, there was absolute darkness under the cliffs.

So intent on his musings was he that he did not note the curious light that burst upward from the Jericho Terrace while the launch nosed its way slowly toward the boathouse landing.

IT was not until he had rummaged in the boat-house and found the electric torch kept there, not until he and the Flemish woman were toiling up the rock-hewn stair, that he realized that he had been supposed to remain in the City and perhaps communicate with Swansea! He had forgotten his pledge, ever since he had rushed down the hill into St. David's from the house of Hawkwell.

For a few moments he felt acutely sick. Could he go back now?

No, not while the red shone above the green! Frost, well, Frost could gnash his teeth and be hanged. Did he expect a fellow to stay away when the girl he loved had signalled that things weren't all right?

Gaining the top at last from the sheltered face of the cliff, they heard the wind scream again; until now, when he stood where the gale raced untrammelled across the island plain, he had forgotten the increasing roughness of the night.

He pounded on the heavy gates opening to the Persian Terrace.

"Who's there?" came a strainedly calm voice from beyond.

"Stapleton, this is," he answered. "Open up, quick."

"All right, sir." There was a long chapter of clanking of bolts and bars, and presently one of the two massive gates was swung inward a little, far enough for a cautious electric eye to look forth.

At once the gate swung closed again. "Who is that with you, sir?" the pained voice inquired.

"Someone I've brought," snapped Tom. "It's all right, officer; it's important for us to get in there."

"I have no orders, sir," remonstrated the invisible one. "I'll have to—"

"Orders be damned. Wake up, man. Let us through or it'll be hot for you."

The American put his weight to the portal, taking the guard by surprise. A moment later he was inside, calling, "This way, ma'am," and the aggrieved constable was plainly given to understand he had no choice between letting these two advance or putting the question to a physical test with the American. He yielded.

They went on while the guardsman refastened his ineffective doors.

"That's one fence we took in our stride."

"Very good, young man."

That epithet smarted yet. Nevertheless, the incident had increased Tom's confidence, and it was with something like exultation that he moved forward. They passed through another, unwatched, gateway into the Monkey Terrace.

Suddenly they noticed a mixed and troubled light that spread about the corners and above the battlements of the castle, illuminating with a smoky gleam what could be seen of the building. While they made for the Jericho Terrace, this effulgence, cast through the gateway to the central avenue itself, fell upon them.

He paused, and restrained his companion. "See here, I don't know what all this spooky light is about. Suppose I go ahead and investigate. Are you game to stay outside awhile?"

"Am I—I don't understand."

"Will you wait for me while I mosey in and get the lay of the land?"

"Very well."

A second or two later he leaped up the steps to the higher terrace, and passed the gate. Momentarily he shrank back, when

a wisp of smoke, like a streamer in the wind, curled in his very face, brought water to his eyes.

The old iron stands outside the door had been put to their original use. Each contained a long torch consisting of some resinous wood smeared with pitch, burning hungrily though with much smoke. At the corners of the castle, too, there were other iron stands containing lights that illumined the terrace on both the eastern and western sides of Kestrel's Eyrie.

A constable paced his watch beneath the gaze of the gargoyle, a man whose jigging shade played against the castle stones. In the torrent of wind, he had not heard the American bounding through the gate, and when he turned a slight cry voiced his surprise at Tom's presence. He hurried toward the newcomer.

"Constable! Anything happened?"

"Lord, no, sir." What relief! "But you wasn't expected, sir."

"I've surprised myself, believe me! But all this gaudy light! Something new."

The man had regained his composure. "Yes, sir," he assented demurely. "They've only just now been touched off. They have settlin' light inside."

"Settling light? What d'you mean?"

"Those tubes, sir," pointed the man, indicating a metal cylinder afar in the western corner of the terrace. " 'Twas a chap from Fishguard as brought 'em all the way by water; the launch was fair weighted down." The constable stretched his right arm reminiscently. "*We* had to fetch 'em up those stairs. Dear me, it was an evening's work, sir."

"Acetylene light!" exclaimed Tom, coming to grips at last with the meaning of all this. "Foxy Frost! They enlisted you, eh?"

"We all lent a hand at getting the businesses up. But there's no relief and no victuals for us, sir, not until blessed midnight."

"Foxy Frost. Any other little precautions, officer?"

"Not as I've been told, sir."

"And no food, you say. I'm starving, too, come to think of it. I could handle a couple of T-bones myself."

Tom passed on, leaving the constable to pace his watch in the wind and make a sprawling shadow on the wall.

The statues stood in a new world now, for one of the acetylene lights stood on the platform at the parting of the stairs. In that shivering, hissing, purplish brightness it was not difficult to imagine that those creatures were unstill, that while one's back was turned a satyr beckoned to a nymph or a sleeping lad turned on his side.

He was not sorry to leave the statues and pass through the little rooms toward the Refectory. The gun room and the study were dark, but while Tom's hand was on the Refectory knob, a trifling discrepancy made him pause.

The customary carpet was not there and the plain wood felt strange underfoot. When the American looked down, the modicum of light that found its way underneath the door showed a white patch in a corner of the room. He thought it worth feeling for. It was a slip of paper.

He fumbled for a match, remembered that his vestas were gone, and stole back to the door beyond which lived the statues. Ascertaining that the constable was not just then looking in, he examined the paper with care. It was only a small crumpled piece torn from a larger sheet. The bold, rough writing it bore reminded Tom curiously of Sir Anthony's finical hand, but he felt that it was distinctly another man's.

The contents were mere fragments of notes:

"—to get an opinion from Hawkwell—after 'Udolpho.'
The knob will turn when—[words undecipherable] mechanism is set back.
—tested this many times."

It occurred to him to examine the other side, and he found

dim words there, too. He tried to make out what seemed to be a name, or more than one.

"—Mrs. Fitz-Herbert——Port—"

"What the ding ding is there in that? Some crazy notes." He stuffed the paper in his pocket. "Two good minutes gone to grass." But it was odd, anyhow, that someone had put down Mrs. Fitz-Herbert (whoever she was) alongside of Port (which he knew was the name of a wine).

With no more ado he entered the Refectory. Here again was the acetylene cylinder with its two small separated jets furnishing a crisp empurpled light. This Tom took in with one quick glance, this as well as the fire in the grate, the white curtains drawn across the windows, and the group who sat about the circular table: Sir Anthony, Mottram, Hector, Frost, and an officer the American recognized as the Sergeant from St. David's. Robert Veryan paced the shorter side of the room, his huge hands knotted behind him, his body bent, almost a crawling thing.

"I'm among you, gentlemen!"

"Well, strike me pink!" cried Hector, while his chair scraped back from the table.

The others merely looked their surprise, except Frost, who was on his feet immediately, his voice all spines. "So we see. And how did you arrive, if I may inquire?"

"Why, I just—just got a boat—and came across."

"Very lucid," said Frost and Tom winced at the cold steel beneath his sarcasm. "I'll have a word with you, Stapleton, in private." Then Tom grew almost dizzy, realizing what the word would be.

Almost before he knew it, he and the detective were standing alone in the Hall of Arras.

"Why did you come back? Where are my men? If you haven't

queered the pitch—" The outburst deluged Tom while he strangled and stammered.

"I—er—I had to come back—you see—" Then he realized utterly that Frost could not know what he was talking about, and he didn't believe that he wanted Frost to know, quite yet. He parried defensively. "Did you—uh—manage to—"

"Yes," savaged Frost, "no thanks to you. I had to put the call through myself, though. As it happens, it is probably all right."

He commenced stalking about, lifting one foot and then another like a cat that has stepped in a bowl of paste. He gave off little threatening rumbles; then he turned and demanded searchingly, "What's behind this, Stapleton?" Then, as Tom fumbled for words, the detective relaxed into a tone less harsh. "American bravado? Couldn't you keep away from the danger here?"

"You give me too much credit, Inspector. I don't go around looking for danger. But I want to know about Arthura."

Frost repeated "Arthura!" as if it were the strangest word in the world.

"Yes, Arthura. I—I'm sort of worried about her. That's why I came back, really."

"I don't understand," said Frost, perking his head sharply. "What do you imagine is wrong?"

"I didn't say anything was wrong. I just want to feel sure she's all right."

"Of course she is. She wished to retire early; that is why you don't see her here. We have guards enough here, trustworthy men, with no Veryan quarrels in their backgrounds, to maintain the watch until the Swansea contingent arrives."

Tom's breath came in the nick of time to save his life. "Gee, that's good." He murmured to himself, "Anyhow, it was only red above green."

"What's that?"

"Oh, nothing. Listen, though, Frost. I had a hunch tonight, and I followed it."

"You mean you took some unauthorized step?"

"Unauthorized, all right. You know the Flemish woman living on Trefeidden Moor? Well, I've just brought her to the castle. She's waiting on the Monkey Terrace right now."

Frost seemed to quiver for a moment, and his voice was not quite collected. But his eyes showed no surprise. "You brought this woman and she's here now? What for?"

"Drat it all, Inspector—for luck. I told you I had a hunch. Don't you want to be present when she meets Sir Anthony? I do."

The detective moistened his grey lips. "A stunt, eh? It won't do, Stapleton. I must consider this a most unwarranted action."

"But hang it—"

Frost's hand was raised. "I absolve you, Stapleton, but have you considered what *her* motive in coming here may be? Risky, that's what it is."

"You've got this all wrong."

"That's enough. I shall have to send a man to bring this woman inside. I'll have to lock her up, in Arnott's room, I fancy. Um-m. I believe that's all we have to discuss in private."

Tom moved between Frost and the door. "Half a sec, Inspector. What about all this light? You've been sending way off for this acetylene layout without any help from me. What's the idea?"

"We had to send further for those pine torches in the entrance than for the acetylene flares. Come into the Refectory, Stapleton, and we'll take up this and other matters. There are other matters, you will learn."

"Right. Speaking of the Refectory, what about discussing some food?"

"The cooks are off duty just now," answered Frost with a queer smile. "This will make you forget hunger, Stapleton."

"That so? Well, Inspector, as long as the attack from the mainland didn't materialize, I feel better."

"The attack from the mainland? Well, perhaps not."

Mentally Tom consigned Frost to regions of discomfort because his answers were always vexing, but without comment the American followed the detective back into the Refectory where the four men were sitting at the big round table while Robert Veryan crept from wall to wall. The four looked at Tom, saying nothing, and he took his seat among them with a grim sense that all alarm was not over yet.

Frost opened the door into the Broad Corridor, spoke quietly for a moment to someone out there, whose gruff voice could be heard acquiescing.

"Giving his instructions about the Flemish woman," thought the American. "Well, she'll have to follow orders. I've done my stuff."

Frost returned to the table. "When you came in, Stapleton," he said, "we were discussing ways and means. The fact is, there is someone else—a stranger—in the castle."

"Is or was," muttered the Sergeant.

Tom went pins and needles all over. "What!" he cried, and at that moment a mighty burst of wind shrieked upon the building.

Robert Veryan had paused and had turned his face with its wide, blank eyes toward them. He seemed less a man than some amorphous, jelly-like thing, quivering at uncomprehended impacts.

Frost raised his voice a little. "Yes, we have a visitor. He apparently made his entry just at nightfall while we had scattered after dinner. We'll be glad to have you join our conference on capturing him."

"The murderer!"

"A visitor," insisted Frost softly.

Tom started up again. "Say! why didn't you tell me about this before? Why, Arthura—"

Frost waved him down. "Come, Stapleton; that's mere childishness. Miss Veryan is perfectly well and safe. Haven't I told you that men we can trust are guarding the corridors upstairs?"

The American subsided. "All right, then. But what about this visitor? Has someone seen him? Why haven't you nabbed him already?"

"We haven't seen him," Frost answered, "but we have seen his tracks; they were all over the place."

"Were? Have you cleaned 'em up already?"

"They've vanished," said the detective, and while Tom's uncertainties were still rising to his lips, Frost moved across to the end of the room near the door which opened into the Broad Corridor. "Look here. Sir Anthony safeguarded this for us himself."

Tom saw now what had become of the rug which had been in the study. It filled part of the bare floor next the wall. Frost lifted a corner of the covering and Tom's glaring eyes saw the outlines of four footprints chalked in white.

"They have disappeared—dried, you see. An hour ago they were soppy."

Tom was beside him, bending down. "Great day! Bare feet!"

"Just so. Our barefooted visitor contrived to get onto the Jericho Terrace somehow just about dark, and then, when the constable there was at the other end of his beat, in he pops through a window in the Hall of Curtains. (You shall see, Stapleton; it was a neat burglar's job: glass cut away and lock unfastened. When he was inside he took the time to replace the glass!) There was no one watching here at the time. And he came straight into this room and straight across to this door. The carpet took poor prints as the water spread a little, but we have his signature on the floor. As plain as a pikestaff, eh, Stapleton?"

"But what—what became of him? Did he go outside into the corridor there?"

Frost shook his head. "I think not. He seems to have confined his activities to this room. Where he went from here, we can't say; he seems to have dried his feet on the Refectory carpet before he left."

Tom stood up. "Well I'll be jiggered! And the policeman at the door told me that nothing had happened here."

"The constables have not been told," Frost declared, "and won't be. I think that the six of us can take care of this gentleman by ourselves."

"And how do you propose to do that?"

"By waiting. We'll constitute a trap. The fellow may not know we've found his tracks; he's probably gone to cover somewhere. As soon as we've chosen the best vantage points we'll have these lights out and do a little waiting."

"In the dark?"

"Just so. Will you join us?"

"You bet I will. But suppose he doesn't come back? Supposing he's—left?"

"It won't do, Stapleton. Where could he have gone—in this tempest?"

"You think he's bound to show up again?"

Frost spoke with emphatic precision. "I do, and to prove it I'm prepared to remove every stone of Kestrel's Eyrie from its place."

"You mean there may be a secret passage here somewhere?"

"I do."

"Jehoshaphat!"

It was then that Mottram, who had seemed rather dazed (though hardly more silent than the other Veryans about the table) raised his hand to cover a yawn and the American saw upon his wrist the mark like that of the lash of a whip.

The incident was a turning point. Tom's soul was galled. Wasn't he to understand *any* of the things that were going on around here? Was he to follow instructions blindly?

Was Frost playing with him? Were all these men playing with him?

From this tormenting throng of perplexities a purpose was engendered. All right; he would follow instructions as far as his discretion advised, but he would keep his own counsel, too. He would be watchful for more than this barefoot visitor and, by jingo, he would keep an eye on Frost himself! Why, it was even possible that Frost had invented the intruder. Those typical police boots might not be extra small, but the feet within them probably were.

Above all, he would reassure himself about Arthura. Was it believeable that she would have gone to bed after promising to stay in the tower? Yes, and especially after signalling.

The Inspector was making a statement. "These cylinders have an invisible pilot-light. I'll give you a lesson in managing one. I think one of us had better be posted near each of the tubes and know how to light the thing instantly if there's any sign or sound of this prowler.

"Sir Anthony, are you—?"

"I'll share the watch, you may be sure."

"Why aren't we in full force, Inspector? What's the matter with Powell?"

"Unfortunately, he cannot be with us," murmured Frost, and the trace of a sardonic smirk dwelt a moment or two on his face. The others about the table stirred.

Tom asked quickly. "You don't mean anything's happened to him?"

"He and Mrs. Powell are being detained."

"What for, for crime's sake?"

"For a good and sufficient reason," retorted the detective. "If there has been a prearranged plan of any sort, part of it, at any rate, is spoiled."

"Well, I'll be—who did the cooking, then?"

"They did." Frost's smirk was more apparent. "They cooked and then they were arrested. They are locked up in the billiard room; so kindly don't venture that way."

"You can trust me to give anything like a gaol a wide berth. Phew, this is getting complicated. Bransonby, lend me some of those matches."

Hector had just lit his fourth Lucky since the American's arrival. With an obliging grunt he tossed the remainder of his paper of vestas across the table.

"You won't be able to smoke while this is going on," warned Frost sharply.

"Of course not, Inspector," Tom assured him with his evenest voice. "I just don't like to be shy of them."

A quarter of an hour later he was alone in darkness. He now understood the working of the cylinders. The rooms inside the castle, as well as the Jericho Terrace itself, had been plunged in darkness which could be turned to leaping light at the merest touch. He was in possession of one new fact from Frost. The man sent to fetch the Flemish woman from the Monkey Terrace had reported that she was not to be found. No doubt, still lurking somewhere among the inky avenues of that place, she waited for Tom himself to return for her. At all events, her arrival on the island was known, and the constable on the Jericho Terrace had strictest instructions to prevent her from entering the castle itself.

At this time Tom commenced his watch by disobeying Frost's instructions.

His province was, by request, the balcony. He wasted not one minute there, but moved, soft as a cat, into the Long Corridor, blessing his method in changing to a pair of sport shoes with rubber foundations. He passed the room that Arnott had occupied, intended for the Flemish woman's cell, and the narrow bathroom adjoining, came to Arthura's door. He knew that one of the con-

stables remaining on duty still lurked somewhere beyond this meeting of the passages, but he did not expect to investigate without the man's knowledge.

His heart beating in his throat, he tapped the oak softly, got no response. He struck again, louder.

From a yard away in the darkness came a gruff and frightened voice, and a light, concomitant with it, flashed in his face. "What are you doing there? Oh, sir, it's you."

"It's all right, officer. I want to make sure that Miss Veryan's safe inside here. Constable Lewis, isn't it?"

The light was lowered to the floor, and the voice spoke infinite relief. "Yes, sir. What should be the matter, sir?"

"Nothing, I hope. But I just want to be sure."

"Very well, sir. But there is no need, you know. I pass this door every couple of minutes or so. All secure."

"You mean you've tried it and found it locked?"

"Dear, me, no, sir. I mean everything is quiet-like."

"Of course it is," declared Tom. "Always is, isn't it? But these crimes have happened just the same."

"Really, now sir—"

"Stand by, officer," bade Tom. "I'm sort of responsible for Miss Veryan, you know, and I'm going to check this thing."

He knocked once more, this time a sharp tattoo, and both men listened intently. Still there was no reply.

"Bless her, she's sleeping sound," whispered Lewis. But the American struck the door vigorously to interrupt his speech.

"Arthura, Arthura," he called, but said no more, for fear the man would read the love and dreadful anxiety in his voice.

This time, when no response came Lewis commenced to pant. "That's queerish, sir. Maybe she is afraid to answer."

"She knows my voice," said Tom grimly. "By thunder, if this door is locked—Bransonby's master-key—"

He turned the knob with a critical, breathless thrust, and the

heavy portal swung wide, revealing the depth of the room and the outlines of things. There was no need for the constable to flash his light inside, to know that the bed was empty. Pillow and counterpane were perfectly smooth. While the light explored the surfaces and corners of the room, with all things neat in their appointed places, it was evident that Arthura had probably not been in the chamber at all that evening.

"She's not here!" exclaimed Lewis with magnificent anticlimax.

Tom's anguish was too great to frame a cry.

A great thought dawned in the constable. "She has gone, sir, like the gentleman who wrote verses."

In spite of the clash of grief and fear in his mind, Tom was able to do one thing. He turned on the man, grasped his shoulders.

"That's enough." The constable wavered in that grip. "Not a word of this—get me? Not a syllable until I say so. I want just five minutes—no, ten, to think and do a little investigation for myself. So keep everything on the Q. T. Just close the door and go on as if nothing's happened." He collected himself, assumed the easiest tone he could. "The chances are that there's nothing in this. So don't make a fool of yourself."

Lewis was doubtful. "I'm not sure, sir, it isn't against orders. I was given to understand, sir—"

"Well, I'm giving you to understand now. *Leave this to me.* I'll do what is necessary, and I'll—I'll take responsibility."

He did not wait to bandy words, but hastened back to the balcony. The room in Arthura's tower was all his thought now; she had been there, at least. Some message might be awaiting him, or—hope that mocked itself—she might be there herself.

But now his heart leaped with horror when he thought of those childish footprints which had dried on the Refectory floor, and what they might mean.

On the balcony he raced as fast as he dared in the darkness,

went sprawling and stumbling up the half-turn of balcony stairs, a speech of greeting formed on his lips, if the hopeless hope should prove true.

The small round room was empty. Though the lamp with its singular shade was now extinguished, he knew she was not there, even before he lit one of his new matches. The gale, which had swollen since he had crossed the sound, whistled and shrieked about the tower, and through the cracks around the closed casements there was an influx of air that troubled the little flame of the match. He looked about eagerly in the waning light, relieved to see no sign of haste or struggle, anxious that there might be some explanation why she had left the red above the green and then departed, going perhaps—

From beneath the lamp itself where it rested on the table drawn close to the eastern window, an end of paper protruded. He steeled himself before he struck a second match, released the slip, saw the words, and read them.

Those few plain words, the first he had ever received from her, perhaps to be the last:

Tom dearest:

I can't quite understand. Uncle Anthony and Hector don't agree about my going to St. David's. Uncle Anthony wanted me to go tonight after you left, but Hector wants me to stay here. I think Uncle Anthony is afraid for me to stay. I wish you would come back to help me. If I am not here, you will get this. I don't know what is to become of me, but I love you always. Someone is coming—I'll hide this.

Arthura.

The match burned out. He stood there blind; his soul baffled, strangling in the mists. Where was she, then? Had Sir Anthony's wish prevailed? Had she gone to the mainland in some secret way? He divined beneath those simple words the burden of some unutterable fear.

The mysteries of this accursed castle drove like a whirlwind

through his brain in their most hideous shapes: the indelible moment when Robert Veryan, half-midget, half-marionette, had sunk fainting at his post while someone tried the black door—the reeking night when, with the scent of blood in his nostrils, Crabtree had gone to Sir Anthony's rescue, and an unknown visitor had played mad pranks with two men nearly slain—the fantastic end of Norshire, mad as the man himself.

Tom's breath came painfully as if after long physical exertion. It was an effort to light another match in order to scan the words again, seeking a ray of deliverance in them.

The howl of the wind came by fits and starts, in sudden flaws that fell away to momentary silence wherein the muted roar of the sea could sometimes be heard. Such a moment occurred when the match made a tiny blaze. The wind was stilled; yet he was listening, not to the sea, but to a dim call as of a voice from the shuddering darkness below the cliffs.

His imagination, freed of all restraint, ran riot. His blood froze.

A feeling welled within him, impossible to allay, that some grisly sea-monster rising from the deep had brought this terror into their midst. Perhaps it was some drowned thing, with wan, lank locks, eyes of jelly, and soft, white, crumbling flesh.

He listened, his whole body become one straining ear while his heart seemed to leap throbbing into his throat and then to stop completely. The waxed match burned down to his fingers, but he did not heed. He stood there listening in the dark, while the winds lashed the tower, and in the intervals of the gale he heard the cry repeated, throbbing upward from the very depth of the darkness below.

"Hullo! Hullo-o-o!"

So dimly had it mounted from the unguessable darkness that he could hardly tell if the cry were not out of his own soul.

He listened still, his breath charmed away, while the towering wind shook the castle, listened still while the gale loosed its grasp and seemed to recede in an instant far, far away—and the cry kept bubbling up out of the cauldron below the cliffs.

His next actions were like a dream gone beyond recall. He could not remember scrambling down the stairs of the tower and blundering among the furniture in the gallery, and so on down to the abode of the statues. He seemed to awaken exactly in the entrance door where he collided with a man rushing in from the Jericho Terrace. Out there, he saw, the acetylene light was blazing now, and the incomer's silhouette revealed his character.

"Constable, did you hear a shout?"

"Lor', sir, I was afraid you was one of those images. Yes, sir." The man's voice was tinged with fear. "There's someone seems to be down at the foot of the cliffs."

"Did—did you recognize the voice?"

"No—not quite, sir."

"You think you may have heard it before?"

"I misdoubt I have, sir, but I can't surely put a name to it. If you please, sir, I must go report to the Inspector."

"You know where to find him, don't you? He's in the Refectory. And by the way," he called after the fleeting constable, "don't fail to tell Sir Anthony, too. He's waiting in Hieronymo's Pantry with Mottram."

Tom passed outside to the low parapet of the terrace above the cliffs, but for the present the thing down below seemed to have grown still, or else the crash of the waves upon The Bitches nearly opposite drowned its voice. Out of the gulf rose nothing besides the rage of wind and sea.

He stood there staring blindly down while men moved all about him, while lights from rooms inside the castle were massed along the brink, and everyone threw swaggering shadows that swarmed upon the castle wall. And when the purple glare grew strong enough to light a section of the broken cliffs, the voice swam up from the clashing depths again, and this time Tom himself thought that he had heard that voice sometime, somewhere, before.

". . . up there . . . need . . . body down here . . . need help."

"He says to send somebody down," cried Hector who rested, arms folded on the parapet, trunk leaning toward the gulf. "Who the devil is he and who the devil can go down?"

"Listen!"

". . . now . . . there's a body down here . . . may not hold much longer."

"He says there's a body down there!"

Tom went weak, thinking of the empty room and the message in the tower. He tried to speak, gasping; words would not come.

"Someone must go down," said Sir Anthony, who stood bareheaded by the parapet, his white hair tossing. "We must send down a man without delay."

"Shall I go?" asked Hector, and Tom, shuddering against the

parapet, cursed himself for not having the strength even to volunteer.

"No, thanks, Bransonby," said Frost. "He'll have to go down on a rope, and ropes have only a certain strength." He looked about, choosing among the group of eight men clustered there. His hand fell on Mottram's shoulder. "You," he said; "you go down."

A few minutes later Mottram, with two ropes firmly secured beneath his arms and two others carried around his neck, went fearlessly over the edge of the parapet, torch in hand, and commenced the seventy-foot descent to the sea. Cautioned not to foul the lines and to prevent as far as possible their sawing against the rock, he nevertheless soon faded into the murk beyond the range of the illumination. The watchers above saw him only as a blob of yellow light playing on the stones and ever receding. By a signal-system of jerks on the loose rope, he informed those holding on above how much should be payed out.

Once occurred a long delay, and the men above thought him all the way down. But no; the descent continued.

Even the yellow spot of the torch had disappeared, and it was evident that Mottram had passed below some outthrust ledge.

At last the taut rope slackened, and the jerks signaled that the scarred man had definitely reached the end of the descent.

Time seemed to solidify into hours while the men on the terrace awaited the next signal. By now, Sir Anthony had been persuaded to go inside, away from this angry wind. Robert Veryan followed at his heels, walking crazily, silent.

When at last the climb commenced, necessarily more laborious than the descent, there were two ropes to haul on. One, indeed, returned more quickly than the other. The yellow blot showed that Mottram was coming in advance. Then the man himself appeared, his chopped face upturned, a ghastly object in the purple light. Nearer he climbed, and nearer, persevering

among the bosses and dents of rock, pausing where a steady foothold was obtainable to cast the light of his torch below as an aid to the one who followed. Many times they had shouted down to him before he could hear, but when at length the purport of their cries came to him, he shouted an answer that the wind tossed, partly carried away.

". . . Evelyn down there . . . tied him . . . safe until morning . . ."

"Arnott!" Frost's astonishment was plain for all to read.

At this news Tom sent up a strange prayer of thankfulness. It was true that his joy was irrational, for more than one corpse might be pitching undiscovered in the waters below the cliff. Nevertheless, his heart, which might have been a dead lump within him, revived so suddenly as to make his whole body throb as one. Sweat poured off him. Just then, when he looked at the others there, he could not understand why they, too, did not appear jubilant, until he remembered that they had not heard that Arthura was gone.

Mottram had almost reached the summit of the cliff when the man who followed in the path he showed appeared within the zone of light. A thrill that was half surprise and half elation over an accurate guess possessed Tom when he saw the wizened face of the Curator of the Museum of the Saints. Small, dried-up, yet energetic and assured, he climbed as nimbly as might some near-human ape.

Among those gazing down were a few who had smiled or winked at each other sometimes when they passed him in the street, but they did not smile now, those who watched him reach the parapet and stand in the furious wind. In his clerical garb he had seemed puny and weak, but now, stripped save for a pair of swimming trunks, he was far from a laughable object. His leanness was all muscle, and while he stood in the gale, unshivering, his grey hedge of hair dripping brine, he might have been a type of one of the smaller sea divinities.

About his waist was a fine brass chain securely binding a book-sized oilskin packet at his hip.

He seemed to have no thought that suspicion of great crimes lay upon him. He unhesitatingly advanced toward Frost. The curator and the detective were about of a height, and their speech together in that tempestuous place savoured of the meeting of two stunted giants.

"Are you in authority here, sir?"

"I am, and I shall have to warn you that as you are under—"

"I have to make a report to you."

"If you will waive—"

"The man whose body lies down there had met with foul play."

"Foul play!"

"I do not think there can be any doubt of it. I found—"

Frost made an imperious gesture. "Not now! We'll go inside. In your condition, you're playing the fool with death out here. I want Sir Anthony to be present when you tell us what you have to say."

"Most assuredly." The curator's voice rang. "He is paying his debt tonight. Take me where he is."

The men passed inside the castle, the swimmer protected by a great-coat that one of the constables had run into the cloak room to fetch.

Sir Anthony was leaning over the fire in the Refectory. Robert Veryan had resumed his dragging promenade.

While the head of the house sat there, rubbing his hands together, shivering now and then, so that his whole body seemed racked, an image of the end of life, Tom felt pity more than he could express. His original intent to break Arthura's absence to him withered; the American had not the heart. Some other mouth had run before to tell the gist of the other news, and when the old wan man looked up with tired eyes and saw the curator approaching, he asked like one who still had hope:

"You are sure? It must be Evelyn? This is an evil sea, and there have been many drowned men here."

The curator, who stood beside the table, looked down, ogling his contempt. "It is the man I have seen coming this way often of late, with a face like a white lamp."

A spasm of pain seemed to contort one side of Sir Anthony's face. He shrank before the fire again, seeming to withdraw within himself, but they heard him mutter, "It must be, then; it must be."

Robert Veryan paused again, and Tom saw his glassy stare turned on the curator with the faintest liveness of speculation in it, as if this death had excited in him some quirk of genealogy. But he said nothing.

Hector said to Sir Anthony, "It's a certainty. James has seen the body, you know."

"Yes," Mottram muttered, "it's Evelyn. It was Evelyn."

"Oh, to be sure—yes—of course." A significant, pitying look passed from man to man there, while Sir Anthony spoke like one absorbed. "So—the last man on earth to make away with himself. Why should he—do this? He had youth and genius, and was happy in creation. As happy a man, I should think, as you would find in all England."

For a minute or two time seemed checked, and while they lingered in the old monks' dining room, and the flagellant wind that prowled and pounced on the castle was for the moment still, the old man by the fire and the old man by the table seemed to be fixed like statues. Only the water slowly pooling from the curator's toes gave a sign that there was change in the world.

When Frost spoke, it was with diffidence, as if he found it hard to overcome the inertia of the group. "There is more in the news than the discovery, Sir Anthony."

A lifed eyebrow. "Ha? There is? To be sure there is." Sir Anthony turned only his head, but his eyes fastened on the curator

and sized him up and down. "What was this man doing here?"

"I have nothing to answer for. My dues and yours are evenly settled at last, Sir Anthony." The swimmer placed his hand on the oil-skin packet. "I came for what was stolen from me so long ago—you know best by whom."

Sir Anthony looked at the curator silently.

"Useless to deny, Sir Anthony, for I have found it. I have sought for it and now I have found it!"

"You have sought."

"Yes. May you never suffer—it was all a skylarking spree for you forty years ago, but a bitter grief for me, a humble cleric of this countryside. What could I do against you when the Missal was gone from the shore? When I returned to St. David's this year, an old bowed man but still strong, and a special trust was imposed on me, I made a vow in my thankfulness. I swore that I would enter this place and recover what had been impiously snatched and no doubt impiously retained. My life in London showed me ways and means. I had learned from a score of unfortunate men how they gained access—well, in a little time I was able to obtain the necessary instruments. Two months ago, as soon as the season permitted, I came and brought the tools across."

"You came boldly in such a night as this, at such a time," murmured Sir Anthony.

"I came by the best choice of tides, knowing that righteousness would bear me up. And has it not? These rooms I found—"

Frost spoke. "Tools, you have no tools now."

The cleric dismissed the suggestion as if it was no matter. "For the past two months they have been lying on the cliffs. There are many places there where things may be hidden. But now I have flung them into the sea."

"You swam the channel with these tools?" Sir Anthony appeared incredulous.

"I had swum the channel fifty times in my youth," returned

the cleric. "It was child's play, and easy still if I bore three times the burden. Yes, I have come and entered the castle twice this year before tonight."

You could not see Hector's eyes, his brow lowered so. "You came in here—twice?"

"Your vigilance had its lapses. Once I found a window unlatched, and once I forced a way. Tonight you have no doubt already discovered the orifice I made in the window. I must apologize suitably for these necessary damages, Sir Anthony."

The old man by the fire made no response.

"Three times all told, and my search has narrowed. Since the Missal did not lie exposed to view—long ago in your devilish pride and rashness you told me that you had cover here for treasures—I sought for those secret places. I found the secret place, Sir Anthony!"

"Well?" The old man beside the fire seemed unresponsive as dull clay.

The curator drew himself up. "Tonight I have the book." Again he touched the oilskin packet at his thigh. "It was well contrived, no doubt your predecessor Shakespeare's handiwork, the revolving stone and the cupboard in the wall."

Tom, at least, did not emulate Sir Anthony's indifference. His voice sprang. "Which wall?"

"The wall of this room, to be sure. Sir Anthony knows well. With your permission, sir." He stepped across to the other side of the fireplace, prised the edge of stone upward with his thumbs, revealed a cavity some eight inches square.

Frost's reflective sigh was perhaps heard only by Tom. "That's what the footprints were doing there."

Sir Anthony followed the cleric's motions with lack-lustre eye. He seemed bored with all this. "It doesn't matter. But Evelyn—Evelyn—dead."

In the American, too, the excited fires died down. He wandered restlessly along the length of the room, wondering whether

he should, after all, break in, relate the devastating news of Arthura, probably unknown to all of them—more than once at the point of doing so—not venturing to speak of her he loved the most. He dared not for Sir Anthony's sake, but the root of his silence was the hope that she might be the safer as long as none suspected that he knew her to be missing. Were the one responsible among them now, and were he to learn—

Frost spun back to the earlier, fundamental thing. "You were to tell us—"

"Yes, I am about to. My first act, when I regained the free air again, after eluding your clumsy sentinel, was to offer a prayer of rejoicing that I had recovered my trust, and I cast the burglar's tools far into the night. In what scant moonlight remained I then contrived to get down by a precarious path I knew, for to one who has any experience in these matters, these cliffs are laughable barriers."

"You got down—yes?" obtruded Frost with sharpening impatience.

"I got down, sir, and found that in the time of climbing, entering, and descending—hardly an hour, I should think—the wind and sea had risen more than I could have foreseen, and moonlight and starlight were obscured by the clouds. Even below here, where The Bitches give a degree of shelter, the waves were thundering. It would have been wicked folly to attempt to reach the mainland. I stood on my narrow shelf, whence I would have plunged if—"

"It was a body you were speaking of," Frost insisted.

"It was then that I found the body, sir."

"In the water?"

"Yes and no. As my eyes gained a little sight in that darkness, I discerned a white patch lying a little below me on a surface of rock, covered and uncovered by the ebb and flow."

"The face?"

"No sir, not a face. It was a man's white shirt. The face is not white now."

"Quite so." Frost turned on the curator with a sudden baring of teeth. "Now then! What more?"

"Of course, when I found it *was* a body, I endeavoured to preserve it from the sound. The step was very slippery, but I contrived to lift it on to the ledge, secure it, but of course I could not hold it there indefinitely. It was then, in darkness, in that precarious spot, with the corpse beside me, that I decided to avouch myself and call for help."

Frost rasped, "And quite right. But ten minutes ago you told me that you believed—"

The curator bowed assent. "I knew nothing, of course, until the man descended with the torch. It was then that we discovered whose the body was, although it had been cruelly disfigured by the rocks, and we saw—" He looked around inquiringly, and his eyes widened in surprise. "But why should not the man who descended tell—"

Mottram was not there, but Frost merely directed the curator to continue.

"The mouth was wide open. There was a gag in it."

Sir Anthony had been crouched beside the fire, eyes closed, perhaps listening, perhaps not. One side of his face sagged as if the muscles were paralyzed; the other was disturbed at intervals by a spasmodic twitching. Now he straightened and half rose with a cry. "A gag?"

The curator continued unperturbed. "Around the neck a cord was fastened. We thought it looked as if some weight had been attached."

Sir Anthony stood, his face lit with a strange life, though one side moved in a spasm that was more like a galvanic jerking of a corpse. His gaze seemed one of defiance. "You say that around his neck—a cord was fastened?"

"And the Buddha went with him," thought Frost aloud.

The curator stood his ground once more. "You need not take my unsupported word. The man with the torch—"

Tom waited to hear no more, for perhaps he alone of the little group knew where the "man with the torch" had disappeared. Several moments earlier he had noticed Mottram slipping with something of stealth through the door to the Broad Corridor. The disappearance itself would hardly have been suspicious, but the feline subtlety of Mottram's movement did much to perturb Tom, already overwrought. From that exit Mottram might have gone to any part of the castle, to the kitchen and the other rooms south of the Corridor, or through the Hall of Curtains to the statues and so to the upper floor or out-of-doors. Tom, emulating Mottram's slyness, withdrew from the Refectory.

"Great heavenly day!"

He had almost run into the scarred man, standing in the passage a couple of yards from the door. His shoulders bent, Mottram studied with a curious compound of intentness and dubiety the thing whose handle he held in one hand and whose edges he felt with the fingers of the other: a dagger, bright metal marred by dark brown blotches and an incrustation of white.

"Mottram! What—where in God's name did you get that?"

The other slowly looked up at the American. "Down below."

"Down below! You mean to say you brought that up with you from the cliff?"

"You didn't see me, did you? But I had it on me."

"You found it down there?"

There was a third voice. "Well, strike me pink!"

Both turned, saw Bransonby looming.

"James! You found that thing? Where—where was it? Here, let me have it."

The weapon passed from Mottram's yielding fingers to Hector's. The huge man regarded the deadly steel with a cer-

tain repugnance which had been lacking in Mottram's study. "Ugh! someone skewered with this right enough. These salt marks weren't made in a day, either."

"You shouldn't be so touchy," said Mottram in a voice which held a squeal of querulousness. "Some of your shady friends may have shown you a few tricks odder than this."

A tingling numbness permeated Tom. "Shady friends, Bransonby? What the dickens—?" Suspicion commenced to take root in him, a mushroom growth.

Hector laughed; to Tom this was the first time that his laugh had actually seemed sinister. "I did a little secret service work once and was on the force, knew a goodish few on the shady side. When you do, you make friends with 'em. Can't help it."

"What! You made friends with thieves and murderers?"

"Well, not exactly murderers. But you may as well know, Stapleton, I had a fair visiting list of mobsmen of various sorts. To investigate—"

Tom found tongue. "Well, it seems to me that if anybody needs a little investigation, it's you yourself, Bransonby." He moved a step forward. "If I thought—"

He broke off, seeing the door from the Refectory open sharply and Sir Anthony standing there. Below the old man's shoulder stood Frost, and the others of the group were partly visible.

What followed was for the most part dumb show. Hector turned, and seeing Sir Anthony there, made for a moment as if he were about to conceal the weapon, but appeared to change his mind, and held it out, offering it for inspection. Sir Anthony's eyes turned from a general survey of the trio to Hector and from Hector to the thing he held. At sight of it, the old man's features seemed to age ten years; then a rage so strong that it seemed impossible in such a face flamed up. Suddenly he advanced, his hand shot out, and the dagger was in his hand.

"Hector! you!" he cried, his voice gone up into a queer wail-

ing shriek of despair, and before anyone could intervene, he raised the thing, and drove it against the huge chest of Hector Bransonby.

Men cried out, but instantly there was a difference in their cries. For the weapon did not pierce the body, but fell ringing to the stony floor. Hector stood smiling curiously.

"Don't be surprised, gentlemen. I've worn this steel vest every night since two years ago."

Sir Anthony threw up his hands. "Arrest him, Frost! Now you know who carried Evelyn to the sea-wall and flung him over—and all."

Hector laughed wildly.

Frost seemed in a quandary, meditating whether or not the three constables who surrounded Hector could cope with him.

Yet the large man showed no inclination to resist. His voice was bitter but amused. "Frost, of all the wrong moves you've made, this is the wrongest. However, I'll just let you find that out for yourself."

"Where'll we put him, sir?"

Frost seemed to make up his mind for boldness. "In the Pantry, and let me have this master-key back after he's locked in." Off marched Hector under guard. "Sergeant, will you take charge of our swimming visitor here. Take the Powells across with you; I'll get in touch with you about them in the morning."

"Do you mean that Mr. Davening's to be arrested, sir? What charge?"

"Take him home, that's all. You can run the launch in this weather?"

"Yes, sir." The sergeant made off.

"Sir Anthony—are you well, sir?"

"Very well, thanks." But the chop-fallen old face was haggard with weariness and despair.

"One of you help Sir Anthony to his—"

"I," said Mottram, and the two went slowly across the Refectory floor.

With trembling fingers Tom felt for matches. This was the time for a smoke. His fingers encountered a scrap of paper.

"Frost, look here. Here's something I forgot. I think you dropped this."

The Inspector turned his eyes down to the fragment. "What makes you think so?"

"I found it in the little room next to the Refectory."

Frost, who had examined the slip, gave a low whistle. "Right-ho, Stapleton, I'll take care of this."

"But what does it mean?"

"I almost think I know. And you may be sure I'm soon going to find out."

"How? Do you mean—?"

The detective stood regarding Tom with a faintly quizzical expression. "I'm on the right track, Stapleton, and I'm going to stay there. Straight, now, do you think I should lose time and take risk by blabbing to you?"

"But great heavenly day, Inspector, you can't—"

"If you wish you may come with me," said Frost crisply. "Or rather, meet me in Mottram's room in five minutes' time. Until then, Stapleton."

Wistfully Tom saw Frost disappear. And with the detective's departure came the torturing question again: should he have told him? *Dare* he tell him? If so, it was too late now.

It was not Frost alone, but Frost with most of the constables who remained inside the castle, whom Mottram faced defiantly a little later.

"He's inside, yes, but you can't see him. He's gone to bed. He's very tired."

Frost tried suavity. "I know that Sir Anthony is a bit wobbly, and no wonder, but won't you just look in and ask him—"

"He's gone to bed," repeated Mottram loudly. "He asked not to be disturbed."

"But it's important, awfully important," protested Tom, elbowing his way before Frost. "He doesn't know—"

Mottram was obdurate, his back against Sir Anthony's door. His features collected into a scowl of desperation. "I say you shan't—"

He broke off, and they knew why when he ceased to speak. "Listen!"

The sound from within Sir Anthony's room was faint, whatever it was.

"What's that?"

"I—I think he's dragging his bed across the floor."

"Yes, I think you're right."

"No, no."

The slightly grating noise ended. Tom pursued his point, for the scarred man was still holding the fort.

"Say, Mottram, what do you think—"

A new sound made them all turn white.

"My God! He's tearing up the sheets!"

Tom was not the only one in whose memory Arthura's dream had recurred. Frost stepped forward, his voice as dry as the rattle of two sticks. "Yes, Mottram, we'll have to go in. Unlock that door."

Curiously stunned, Sir Anthony's watch-dog made no further effort to resist. While they burst through, there was no sound except that of their own movements, and their own voices, nor was there any light except what they brought with them.

Tom, in the lead, gave the wildest cry he had yet emitted, "Gone! He's gone!"

The bed was empty, and it was obvious that the coverings had not been disturbed, much less ripped or torn.

"He must be here somewhere," declared Frost, but the dead-

ness of his voice betrayed actual doubt. "There, Stapleton, try the passage."

Tom darted to the wardrobe behind which lay the entrance to the Candle at Both Ends. He strove with the door.

"Locked?" asked Frost, who had glanced quickly into the lavatory and was testing the catch of the window.

"No, only stuck." The American gave an extra vicious jerk, and the door yielded, showing an empty Candle at Both Ends. "Not here, Inspector. Perhaps he's passed on through—"

"He couldn't have come through here, sir," assured a surly voice from Mottram's room. "Door's been closed all the time."

"But it's impossible that—"

"Oh, my God!"

From the direction of the black door came a slight rustle, a metallic sigh.

The men in the room, looking with fascination at the knob with its two curved handles opposed, could tell by the motion of those adornments that the knob was turning.

"Do you hear someone out there?" asked Tom, whose teeth barely kept from chattering. "I think there's a light showing under the door."

"Why, yes," exclaimed Frost, whose face lost its bemused look. "There is someone, of course." He called, "Who's there?"

"Constable Lewis, sir."

"Is that you turning the handle?"

"No, sir, I haven't touched it, sir. I just heard a sort of squeal and came from the Long Corridor to find out what it was."

"Has anybody come by out there?"

"Not a soul, sir."

With a faint, almost reluctant click the knob came to rest.

At this moment, the one man in the room who bore a light, a constable in whose blood tradition throve, felt that the crisis was too great, and he dashed out of the room crying his fear.

"Confound him!" cried Frost, reaching for his own torch, which there was a moment's delay in extracting, because the object had become caught in the lining of his pocket.

But Tom stayed Frost's hand. "Look!"

"Where? What are you talking about?"

The American held his hands to his head. "Great God! and I'm supposed to know something about house-building, too. Under the door, man, under the door!"

The detective leaned forward, peering. "That's Lewis's light showing underneath."

"I should say it does! But underneath *what?*"

"Under the d—"

"FROST! It shows under the pillars, too!"

Frost's response was a mere gulp of astonishment, while he dropped to his knees and stared along the threshold of the black door.

"The pillars stand clear of the floor, and look, the lintel is cut off even with the pillars. I noticed that freakish construction the first night I came. Jehoshaphat, Inspector! Don't you see? The whole thing must move, door, pillars, padlocks, lintel, and all!"

Frost gave forth a long, diminishing gasp. "You're right, by George!" He was on his feet again, trying the door, pressing, pulling, prying.

By this time there was light in the room again, and Tom, seeking further afield, made a new discovery.

"Say, that's funny. Look at the medicine chest."

The door of the little white cupboard was open, revealing the three shelves within.

"Look at that medicine chest!" repeated the American. "Now, wouldn't that knock you endways?"

Frost was looking there, too. "The empty shelf?"

"You betcha—a heavy brigade of bottles on two shelves and the middle shelf all nice and clean."

"It is odd. Do you suppose—?"

"What the dickens was the idea of making two shelves do all the work?"

"Two shelves do all the work," repeated Frost rather absently. It was obvious that his mind had travelled far ahead.

"Those rounded corners, too, Inspector, sort of fancy and old-fashioned, I always thought they were. But they never gave me a hunch until now."

"A hunch—ah—what do you mean? Isn't that shelf—?"

Both men had moved toward the bed, slightly above which the closet loomed.

"It's the empty shelf that does the work!" cried Tom.

He threw himself across the bed, took hold of the rounded corner, pulled first one end, then the other. He felt a warm moisture on his lips, but did not realize till later that it was sweat from his own brow. At length a steady tug loosened the shelf, and, to the accompaniment of a chorus of surprise from the constabulary in the room, one end of the board came away, the other rounded corner allowing it to turn. To the swinging end was attached a length of chain which disappeared in the slot-like cavity of the wall behind. The movement was accompanied by a slight rasping sound.

"What in the name of heaven—?"

"It's a private entrance."

"To what?"

"From where?"

"From the hall, man."

"But the door—"

"It's a trick door," declared Tom, jumping up from the bed. "The whole frame will move if we give it a little encouragement while the bolt's released. Hurry up—that shelf's moving back into position. Constable, outside there, heads up!"

He leaned his shoulder against the nearer post, that adjoining the lock of the door. Others pressed forward to help, and the combined frame and door-within-a-door responded easily to their efforts.

Two sharp screeches came from the hinged side of the door while the one great mass of wood swung wide.

"Place where it couldn't be oiled, I suppose," passed through Tom's mind. "Boy, if I'm any judge, this thing is old enough to have a right to talk."

Everyone had crowded through into the passage, and all were standing more or less agape, watching the frame return to place with slow dignity.

The edge of the wood met the edge of the stone; they fitted too snug for eyes to detect the join.

"Some work must have been done on that lately, or else the wood must have been seasoned to a miracle when it was set here," said Frost.

Before their amazed eyes the knob slowly moved.

Tom tapped Frost on the shoulder. "The note I found was right, Inspector. The knob always turns when the frame goes back."

"But how can it?"

"Great cats, that's easy. The two bolts impinge on each other. But where's he gone? Lewis, here, said he saw no one. Isn't that right, Lewis?"

The man's face betrayed that his blood, too, was surcharged with traditions of evil things in the night. "Yes, sir," was all he said, but each word spoke a volume.

There was an anxious pause before Frost spoke. "Well, he can't have disappeared into these walls. They're too thin. He's gone through Bransonby's room or through one of these others."

"What are the orders, Inspector?"

Frost hesitated, sucked in his lips, fingered a meditative button.

"Scatter in couples. We simply must find him." Rapidly he told off those who were to go together, some directly downstairs, others through the various upper rooms.

It was Tom's fortune to seek traces of Sir Anthony downstairs in the large rooms at the rear of the castle, and when, after a fruitless search through these portions, save in the Pantry where Bransonby was immured, he emerged from the entrance door, through which the missing man must have gone, he found Frost in earnest conversation with the uneasy sentinel of the Jericho Terrace.

"Yes, sir, I saw him."

"Saw him! He did come out then?"

"Yes, sir. He stopped for a word with me, sir."

Tom's face tightened with blood, and his organs of speech suffered an acute paralysis. "You—you're—wha—"

Frost's words were clipped. "What did he tell you? Where did he go?"

The constable essayed a good, solid voice, as if what had occurred were the most natural thing in the world. "He said what a high, windy night it was, sir, and how he was going to the Monkey Terrace."

The Flemish woman! Was she still there? Waiting for him?

"The Monkey Terrace? What for? Are you sure? Did you see him go?"

The constable gathered a little dignity. "I saw no reason to doubt his word, sir. I didn't think it my duty to ask him what for. He went through the gate that way, sir."

"So you saw him go that way, did you? You let him go?"

"I had no orders to the contrary, sir. He went the other way from the large gentleman."

"Large gentleman? *Large* gentleman? You mean Bransonby?"

"Yes, sir, I believe that is his name. He went out yon toward the farm buildings, sir."

Tom achieved utterance. "Wha—at? After we had him locked up? You let *him* go?"

The constable ignored this unofficial outburst. He still addressed himself to Frost. "I had no orders, sir," he said somewhat plaintively.

Frost turned aside. "Oh, very well." His perturbation was much less than Tom expected and felt himself. "Well, which shall we follow, Stapleton? Why, man, you're as pale as parchment! What's the matter?"

"Nothing," lied Tom. "Carry on, Inspector."

"Seriously, Stapleton, I wouldn't advise—why don't you go inside and rest awhile? As I see it, you've had a strenuous five hours since leaving here this afternoon, and without some nourishment you'll cave in. I'm sorry in a way that I sent the Powells—"

Then at last, in that extremity, the American took the risk he had shrunk from, revealed his secret and his torment.

"Arthura's gone, Inspector."

The incredulity on Frost's face deepened into concern, strengthened into a live anxiety while he listened to Tom's brief account of the discoveries in Arthura's room and in the tower.

"Why, why didn't you tell me this before? Great Scott, Stapleton, we could have prevented—but there it is."

"I couldn't quite bring myself up to it, that's the truth. God knows I tried. Do you think—?"

"I know that Sir Anthony wanted her to go to Hawkwell's

tonight, but wouldn't tell why. I had a feeling that Sir Anthony was overtired, er, perhaps a little unbalanced. Bransonby opposed it."

"He did! He wanted her to stay here?"

"That is so. But I shouldn't attach too much importance to the fact."

A hint in the other's tone caused Tom to ask quickly, "My God, do you know the answer to all this?"

Frost seemed to tighten up. "I do," he answered succinctly.

"You do? Since when—why—what—?"

"I have been practically certain all evening, but the things that have occurred since Arnott's body was found clinched the case."

An almost overmastering curiosity egged Tom on to further questions, but before he could speak, Frost declared, "We're wasting time in talk. Stapleton, Stapleton, I only hope you haven't bitched it. We must be getting on."

"You're right, we must. Come on then, Inspector," urged Tom, moving westward.

"Why, what do you propose?"

It was Hector Tom was afraid of, Hector he wanted to spy on, to circumvent. "Follow Bransonby, of course. What else can we do, Inspector?"

"Keep the wool on, now, Stapleton. I think we'll bring it off. We'll go after Bransonby, then. It'll come to the same thing in the end."

They departed, the voice of the constable vaguely sounding: "I had no orders. He moved off my beat."

A little later a group left the terrace, passing out among the farm buildings, with torches showing corners, sides, rondures of the derelict place. The brief rain-storm of a day or two before had left no damp spots in the earth to take the impress of Hector's feet.

"We'll have to have more light here," said Frost. "Lewis, go back and fetch the man with those extra cylinders—better take a barrow from the tool house here."

"We're at a standstill then?" asked Tom. "What on earth do you suppose he came this way for?"

Frost shrugged. "I don't share his secrets. How can I say? But he might have come looking for Sir Anthony."

"Sir Anthony! He went down to the Monkey Terrace. What did you send men down there for if you don't think—"

"For safety's sake. Sir Anthony may be on the verge of—serious mental trouble, and we don't want to risk his doing himself any mischief. But I don't expect they'll find him there."

The group could see to the wall of the Jericho Terrace. The gate there now opened and a man was visible trundling cylinders through it in the barrow. The gate closed behind him, cutting off the light, and he disappeared temporarily.

But before the gate had closed, Tom laid a hand on Frost's arm. "You hear something?"

"Hear? What?"

Tom had not answered before Frost stiffened, listening hard in the wind. "There is something, certainly."

"There sure is—something crying. Near the chapel, or where?"

"Yes, somewhere that way." Ordering the others curtly to remain, Frost set out in the direction of the chapel, which was one of the outermost buildings of the dozen or so which comprised the farm. Tom was at his elbow. They reached the entrance, the torchlight making a vast orb of yellow which included stairs, portal, and peaked roof.

The cry was louder now, an unmistakable sob of pain, proceeding, surely, from no human throat.

"The thing is round at the back," cried Frost furiously, breaking into a run, which Tom had to sprint to equal.

At the rear of the chapel was one of the pointed doorways

leading to the vaults beneath, the place where cattle had once been housed. The greedy torch discovered something on the ground just underneath that arch, a small, furry, long-eared thing that quivered, from whose pointed jaws, the teeth bared, issued a never-ceasing wail of anguish. Of this mangled beast, clotted with its own blood, all the life seemed to be concentrated in its glaring eyes.

"Great God! It's almost cut in two!"

A heavy stroke of light like a thunder-clap burst upon the American, blinding him, staggering him and overwhelming him. Emotions charged through him so wildly and swiftly that his body flamed to a white heat, seemed to melt away: hate like the heart of a flame, horror that shrieked aloud to the night, despair as black as the heart of night itself, and a furious lust to kill that set all these at naught.

Long, long afterward, it seemed the particles of him reassembled again. The mangled thing was gone now, and Frost was saying, "That settles it. We've got to find him."

"Who?"

"Sir Anthony, of course."

Memory seemed to come back from a thousand miles away. "No."

"No?"

"No—we've got to find Arthura."

"We shall probably find them together."

Frost sent the eye of light inquiring into the vault. The black, earthen floor, with here and there a stepping-stone, at first appeared to hold no trace of visitors.

"No one here," said the detective.

"No; what did you expect?"

Frost ran the torch along the wall, then into the hollow of the vault above.

"There can't be anything up there," declared Tom. "The chapel couldn't hide anybody."

"It's not in the chapel I expect. That beast didn't get round here from there." Frost turned the light of the torch downward to one of the stepping stones near the wall, a bloodied stone. "My guess is that the rabbit fell from somewhere above us," he said, pointing the torch upward again. "I think I see something like an interrupted join in the stones, don't you?"

"But the chapel's—"

"Of course, of course—not from the chapel itself, but from behind. What fools we've been!"

"Behind?"

"What fools we've been, I say. Don't you remember how small the chapel itself is up there? We're underneath the rear now; that is, behind the altar."

"Inspector, take it from me, you're seeing things. Be reasonable."

As if in ironic response, they heard a call proceeding from the very stones above their heads. "Hullo, down there! Anybody down there? Come in, come in."

"Gosh!"

"Bransonby, for a thousand pounds!" cried Frost. "There *is* a room up there. Don't you see how those slots in the wall give room for footholds?" He raised his voice. "Coming!"

As it was, when Tom's inertia was at an end, he was the first to climb the wall, pushing aside the loosely fitted trap. His head thrust up through the floor of a chamber, something like half the size of the chapel itself. His eyes, dazzled by a brighter light than any known in the castle, saw in a blurred stream of vision a table on which stood a hundred glinting shapes of glass and metal, retorts and slabs and engines dancing there, and above all else the commanding form of Bransonby, in whose hand was something that dripped blood. His eyes still just above the level of the floor, the American did not until a later moment see who rested on the floor partly beneath the table and

only a few feet away: Sir Anthony lying prone, his coat stripped off, his shirt half torn off, half darkened by a stain.

"Bransonby, you've killed him!" cried Tom, somehow—he knew not how—already on his knees beside Sir Anthony, searching the old man's breast.

"I have," said Bransonby, and even in that distracted moment Tom caught the cool satisfaction of his tone.

"You've killed him," he repeated, staring up.

The smile on Hector's face was hard and bitter.

"I did, in time."

"What do you mean?"

Frost was there now. "Bransonby, well done," was all he said.

Hector pointed to a corner where light was glaring. There on a cot lay a crumpled form.

"Arthura!"

Hector nodded. "He poisoned her. He meant to do for her with this knife, I think, but perhaps at the last he couldn't bring himself to mar her. It's the same one—"

"Poison!" Tom had leaped across the room. The little dark face was so very peaceful. His agony would have been endurable had it appeared less so, if some spasm of pain had betokened life still there.

"Don't be alarmed, Stapleton. The antidote was on the shelf where the poison had come from, and I gave it to her. I've saved her for you."

Long, long he waited before he could distinguish that she breathed at all.

Was it then, or was it later—he never knew—that the other voices were crying up from below?

"Inspector Frost, sir. Inspector Frost, sir. Are you there?"

"We've been followed here," said Frost, not without satisfaction. He called down. "Yes, all safe. I want one of you

men to get on the 'phone immediately and call a doctor."

"Keverne, make it Keverne," prompted Tom.

"Yes, get Keverne. Get anyone you can. And, oh, Constable, fetch Mrs. Powell again. Smart, now."

"Yes, sir. You go, Charley."

A stir indicated departure; then the uneasy call came up: "This woman here wants to see Sir Anthony."

Frost's voice was jagged. "The woman? You mean the Flemish woman?"

"Yes, Inspector. She says she won't wait any longer."

The detective snorted. "What she may say—" Then his face changed with new decision. "By George! It may be the very thing!"

"No, no, Frost," cautioned Hector. But the detective fell into a brown study while the big man's sense of propriety enlarged. "You can't let her in here, Inspector. What are you thinking of?"

From below they heard the tones of the Flemish woman herself. "Is Sir Anthony there?"

"He is," Frost called down.

"Then I must see him. How shall I get up?"

One of the men in the vault below was heard to say something about fetching a ladder.

"I believe she may come in," said Frost quietly, and called down, "Yes, Madam, you may enter if you wish. But you must be prepared for a very great shock. An accident has occurred."

Tom, kneeling beside Arthura's couch, his big hand gently pressing her forehead, had again lost the sense of time. He had no sense of strangeness either; nothing surprised him any more. All was indifferent: the hidden laboratory, the dead Sir Anthony, the presence of these men, the presence of the Flemish woman herself. Sense and feeling were straitened to one clamorous channel of desire for Arthura's eyes to open, for her lips to smile, for her tongue to speak words of happiness and love.

When the spirit withdrawn to so narrow a universe regained touch with what was about it, the woman of the cottage was standing in the room. How, wondered the American, could one who had been to a man what she had been to Sir Anthony look at his dead form now so unlovingly, so unpityingly?

There was no relenting, no softening in the firmness of that body, the pose of that head. Instead, though for Tom the whole scene throbbed with a hazy unreality, he could distinguish in her aspect and bearing a whole chapter, half of dominance, half of scorn. If in those arms fixed so rigidly by her side, in that triumphant look, and in that silence, words could be read, they were, "So? But I have known it all along."

Hector was speaking to Frost in a subdued voice. "Can't we move him? I hate to see Sir Anthony there, to think of him there. After all, he was Sir Anthony."

Frost shrugged slightly. "Yes, no harm in moving him." He nodded toward the end of the narrow room. "Better, perhaps, before *she* wakes to any of this horror." He stooped to call through the gaping entrance of the floor, but his voice caught in his throat.

The Flemish woman had said something, unintelligible to Tom. The American heard only the gigantic intake of Hector's breath.

"What was that?"

She spoke again, clearly enough this time for Tom to hear, yet in a dreamy way, as if what she said did not matter. "But this is not Sir Anthony, you know."

The little room was humming, swimming, rocking with amazement. Voices arose incredulous, accusing, except the Flemish woman's voice, indeed: her level tones persisted. Calm as a rock, her tone as quiet as a rock's might be, she stood up amid the rain of words.

Hector turned to the detective, "You see! She's a lunatic. You ought never—"

What did she mean?—was her mind wandering?—who was it, then?—how did she know?

When she could be heard, she answered, "Who could know so well as I?"

The rain of words ceased; the throb of opposition broke down. Her calm, her almost stolid certainty commenced to carry conviction.

Tom cried, "Great God, how long have you known this?"

She turned her head a little way, far enough so that he might see that expression on her face, almost oriental in its dispassionateness.

"For many years."

Hector was looming near her now. "How many years? How long?"

She nodded down at the dead man. "Ever since *he* returned from the southern seas. Ever since then."

"How, how?"

She was not perturbed. "By the only surest way. He came in 1914. Don't you see yet? From that day to this did he ever visit me or speak one word to me?" She looked again at the poor head on the floor. "Never."

"But how did you *know?*"

"I have told you, by the only surest way. If he had been Sir Anthony, he would not—he *could* not, have kept away, even for one year. That is how I know."

For a moment the room was alive anew with bustling incredulity. When the voices were stilled again, she stood just where she had stood before.

"I came to this place because I knew. It was not cold curiosity that brought me here. It was to prove—to prove my whole life was not wasted. They said that Anthony fled from this country because of another love, you know. That may have been true, and there may have been something in his blood that kept him tossing on the seas and wandering till he died. But if

he had ever come back at all, he would have come back to me!"

Tom muttered, "The candle. You lit a candle for him every night."

Her eyes darkened, regarding the man on the floor. "It was mockery. I wonder if *he* ever understood. I think he did."

"But proof," persisted Hector.

"I have known it all these years," she said, and the gray mask of her face was lit for a moment by the certainty and wonder of a star.

She seemed to have gone beyond them, and only now to have returned into the bleak dimensions of the laboratory. Her voice lost its strangeness. She pointed down at the body, where the gouted shirt fell away from the neck and revealed two oozing punctures turning black beneath the collar-bone. "I can tell you something that even you can believe. When you examine—this, you will not find the marks of an old, old wound beneath the shoulder-blade. But Anthony had that wound."

"And how do you know that?"

She smiled a little then. "I dealt it to him myself. We were lovers, you know. Ask Clegyrn; he sewed it up. But I tell you now that you will not find such a mark on this man."

"Clegyrn would know," Hector proffered.

"This man knew how to make him forget."

With what poise, with what sure knowledge, she spoke of that mortal flesh. Of the three living men who faced her, not one who did not then believe.

"Then who is he?"

She lifted her shoulders and turned away. "It does not matter. No one matters but Anthony."

"Yes, I see," said Frost, his eyes half-shut, his speech seeming to proceed from a mind thirty-three degrees removed from that of other mortals. "Don't you understand, Bransonby? It all rested on the turn of the cards!"

"The turn of the cards!"

"It's Patrick, sure enough, the old atheist, pharmacist, hypnotist, the dabbler with sheep's legs. According to his own story, he should have a scar across his cheek. But then he told us that himself! Clever devil. Poor devil. Yes, 'poor' devil. Gad, if you'd read some of those letters stored away in the room without any windows—"

FROST laid a hand on Tom's shoulder. "Let me look at her now."

The American rose reluctantly, so stiffened from that unremitting watch that every muscle cried out.

Frost looked up again. "Why, she'll be all right now. You won't really need young Keverne here. But he's coming, of course."

Reaction, like a spinning globe of fire, sent out wider and wider circles in Tom's brain. "I—I can't understand any of it, Inspector. I'm dizzy. It's all mixed up. I guess my wits have gone haywire."

Frost demurred. "Where were *my* wits, you might ask. Why, the whole solution has been staring me in the face for twenty-four hours—yes, in a hundred things, I tell you. The fingerprints alone should have told me the story; I found the real Anthony's here and there among those boxes and cases in the dark chamber and in the billiard room. That set me thinking, those same strange fingers on everything. The glass covered pictures, the wax seals of letters, twenty little knick-knacks that have preserved the prints twenty years and more, preserved them well, too."

"But say, what did you guess before—all this?"

The detective smiled wearily. "Oh, time enough for explanations later. I'll tell you this, though: I'd had a growing sense lately that the truth was a world away from any expressed hypothesis of ours. Then the letters and documents I pored over set me thinking, and after that one thing led to another, until —well, when the old man attacked Bransonby, I knew for certain who our murderer was."

"Yes, but still, remember this afternoon, Inspector. When you told me all about the attack on the castle—Arnott—and sent me away—why—"

The craftiest twinkle was lurking somewhere deep in the detective's eyes. The American wondered if it were possible that, in spite of the doubts and fears of the past hour, Frost had *swung* this thing!

"Well, Inspector, what about it? Were you playing me?"

"A little game of bluff: that was all. True enough, I *did* want re-enforcements; and I sent for them, but not through you. The rest was, well, shall we say the atmosphere?"

"Then you weren't afraid the poet had vamoosed to stir up the folks on the mainland?"

Frost almost laughed. "My dear Stapleton! Look at me. Do I seem like a person who would credit Arnott with leading an attack on the castle, in a coat of mail perhaps, and followed by men with maces and partisans?"

"No, you don't, and I was a sap to believe you might. But what was the idea? Just trying to get rid of me?"

"No; no, indeed. But I chose you for a diversion."

"I don't get you."

"I saw no other simple way to create the belief in the castle that I was convinced of the guilt of some outsider. By sending you on a fool's errand, I was tempting our murderer to act once more, since it was known to everyone here that my re-enforcements were coming before midnight. Oh, you may be sure that when you went away I made no secret of what you had gone for. I expected our man would act quickly, before our auxiliaries were swarming here and his last chance snuffed out. As it happened, you know, the old man acted more rapidly than I anticipated. I hadn't an idea that he would stir when it was barely nightfall."

"And against Arthura," inserted Hector.

"And against Miss Veryan. In fact, his wanting her to go

to St. David's at dinner tonight had rather put me off the scent of him. But I see now that he may have been lulling our suspicions—unless he had some premonition that he would kill her, and was trying to save her from herself. We shall never know. At all events, I had a foul minute, Stapleton, when you reported her missing. I'd never have forgiven myself if—"

The detective let silence finish for him.

"And when I came back, too," muttered Tom. "That razzing you gave me was just a stall, too, wasn't it? I think we'll have to hand it to you, Inspector, as the largest and most successful bluffer since Casey's cat had pups."

"My cards are on the table now," sighed Frost. "And next—"

Tom turned to Hector. "I'd like to know how in the name of wonderful *you* got out here."

"Foll wed Sir Anthony—if that's what you still call him—from the Jericho Terrace. I was in the hall of statues when he played the trick on the constable. I saw him double back from the Monkey Terrace when the man was round the corner. He passed in this direction. Then I had to force my way in here after him—when I'd made out where he'd disappeared. I used the torch from the boat-house to find my way. You left it on the Refectory table, Stapleton."

"And then?" prodded Frost.

"Well, I fought my way up through the trap when he tried to prevent me getting through. First thing, I saw Arthura lying there, and he struggled to keep me from her, snatched this dagger from the table. I suppose he rifled your strong-box to get it back again, Inspector."

"I put the weapon in my case in your room. He broke it open in passing through."

"So then I simply had to tussle hard with him to keep from being jabbed in the eye, as he knew about this waistcoat of mine. He was a great deal tougher than you'd imagine, but suddenly, while I was bearing down, he gave way, and the blade went into

him up to the hilt. I let go the thing then—both our hands were on it—and he, I think by accident, pierced himself again."

"But what about Miss Veryan?"

"Oh, she must have been sleeping here ever since early this evening—in fact, ever since Sir Anthony came into the Refectory tonight and told us she had gone to bed. It couldn't have been too great a task for him to bundle her up here if he'd rendered her unconscious beforehand. There's a slight bruise above her forehead where I believe her head struck the floor here."

Tom spoke. "What was the matter? What could you do for her?"

"Why, as soon as—the old man was off my mind, I examined her. I didn't expect to find her alive, Stapleton. But I saw at once that even if he brought the knife here intending to treat her like he treated Standish and Lionel, he'd changed his mind, or postponed it, or something. He was writing, not attending to her, when I burst in here close at his heels. And when I examined the little bottles there on the stool by the cot, I saw that they were just some sleepy stuff. And I hunted through the works here until I found something to help her over it. I had only time to do that and pick up the dagger when you got here."

After this lucid if not technical explanation Hector breathed heavily, seeming spent.

"Yes, all right," exclaimed Tom. "But what the—what gets me is how did you escape from your gaol in the Pantry in the first place? Did you batter down the door and a couple of policemen?"

"I let him out!" said Frost.

"Hey? You let him out after you had him arrested?"

"Oh, yes, while you were going to Mottram's room ahead of me. I had to, you see," said Frost apologetically. "You two men were the only ones in the castle that I trusted."

"Well, that beats everything else. Why was that, Inspector?"

Frost became meek. "Unpardonable, I know. The fact is, I have feelings myself, Stapleton. I relied on them."

"It sure turned out all right. But I hate to think—well, I just won't. Only I suppose we'll never learn all the details now."

"You're wrong, if this means anything," said Hector, pointing to the table where, on a space cleared for elbow-room among the chemical apparatus, a sheaf of papers lay, the quill pen resting diagonally across. "He must have been at work on this when I forced my way in. He was on his last lap, all right. I had half a glance at it before you chaps arrived. Here, Inspector, take it; it's burning with hell-fire. Now you know everything."

While the hour rolled on to midnight, and on again toward morning, four men in the Refectory read page after page of a curious hand that resembled Sir Anthony's, and yet was not his.

Though there was no date at the head of the writing, it seemed to have been begun soon after the attack on Crabtree, perhaps even while the old man appeared to be near the point of death from his own wounds. The later portions must have been composed in odd snatches of time when he was "working on The Evidences"; and from the testimony of the concluding page it appeared that this version, though not the first, had not been intended to be the last either. Inexorable circumstance had cut short this, the crowning achievement of a life.

It is a good world though I have found only one living creature in it for whom I can feel affection. Only one! Would that she inspired it in me alone! I have known why the others have remained these last long years though terror was in the sky. Arthura, Arthura, Arthura! Love feeds on her presence—love lives in her eyes, her voice, in the touch of her fingers on the keys. Without her, life would be absurd. Now, this American—but I must not commence so or I shall spoil the long, unrolling volume of my motive.

This old handwriting of mine is not so difficult after all. It is scarcely a month since I tried it first and now it is second

nature to me. Sooner or later the end will come, and then it will be too late to boast. Some embolism or clot visiting me in the night, some clue overlooked which may yet rise and smite me, some defect in the arrangements for yet another death, or a suddenly realized necessity for self-extinction—it may be any of these, sooner or later.

Deaths have been a habit with me. They are so easy. They present themselves ready to hand.

James Mottram, hacked and slashed, but allowed to live.
Standish Nicholson, stabbed to death.
Lionel Crabtree, stabbed and poisoned.
Charles Norshire, strangled. And all by one hand!

If the world knew only a little more than it does, it would say that Sir Anthony Veryan had completed his round of infamies—and the world would be wrong, because Sir Anthony Veryan has been dead a score of years. An abler, more scientific, more conscientious artist stands in his place.

I have already had time to fancy how I would set about the killing of Robert, or of our visitor the poet. For Robert playing scrivener in his little, airless cave among the books, it might be a soft advance down the corridor, a soft touch on the baize door, a soft voice—the old voice, the one he has never heard—calling that here was death come to visit him. That would be enough. There would be a stifled cry from within, his chair would scrape, books and bundles would fall in a flood, the genealogist himself would be lying huddled there. I would creep back, and he would not have seen my face.

So it will be if time and opportunity match together. Arnott—no, no more of these fancies now. My main consideration must be to steal minutes here and there for jotting down notes, assembling them, setting these things in order and telling my story to the world. Some, I suppose, will call it a confession. They may call it what they like, but for me it will be the culmination of a successful career. A hole scooped in the earth comforted Midas, and who knows but pen and paper may comfort another's desire! Few men have written a stranger narrative than I commence tonight.

For years to feel this strange and terrifying joy. To reign

in Anthony's place! Other joys followed—joy in their disaster, joy in their fear, joy in sweeping them off the earth!

Long, long ago Anthony and I first knew one another as boys at Harrow, two years of it. Rivals even then, although we did not know in full the chronicles of our kin. A plague on both houses! He would prowl for hours about the library in search of Classic texts. It was not kudos only or high marks he was looking for: he loved the stuff and could not rest at night until he had squeezed each drop of honey from every verse and enjoyed the perfume of every word.

I would not be bested. I followed him, page for page, and when his father called casually one afternoon and took him away on a far journey to the lands where these words had been written—had he taken me, I would have profited nearly as much thereby. As it was, I stayed, but only for another year. I was fourteen when my father vanished from the world, as if he had stuck his finger through the paper curtain and stepped through the hole he had made. He who had dabbled in a strange lore had taught me much that might have proved to my hurt, for I had a glimpse of how to enthrall other minds. Later I found that I had his very gift.

I had studied the texts only to vie with Anthony. My real rage was for Science. Such as Science was at Harrow, I devoured it. When I returned to the North, though still a boy, I gave myself up to it. I married, very young, but I did not love the girl. I needed money, and she had it, but she died soon, and the money went with her.

Shortly afterward Anthony cheated me of a fortune. Maverick, glutted with details of his son's waywardness—tales that would hardly bear repeating—happened to hear reports of my industry, at the old house at Coniston. Whether he actually changed his will or not I cannot say, but I know for certain that he intended to divert to me all of his possessions that were not entailed. Then he died in some lonely Ultima Thule in South America, and his estimable son, laughing my claims to scorn, had my case thrown out of court by an indulgent Master of the Rolls.

He was back from the Mediterranean lands, spreading a very havoc through West Pembrokeshire. And once he came riding through the North. Was it by chance that my house burned the night he was said to lie in the next town, Kendal?

My choicest specimens, my apparatus, my scientific library went up in those flames.

I looked for him next morning with a weapon, but he had started for the South again. And in the time that came my hot anger made me a thing annealable, changed me to an instrument set for the one lofty purpose of revenge.

Well, I was ruined. First, I tried what a direct appeal might do. I bearded him in his home—*his,* though I laugh to recollect it now. His home!

He cast me out.

I hounded him, relentless, courteous, sardonic. I pried into his affairs, shadowed him on his journeys, trod on his heels continually. And during these months of semi-siege—all unawares—I gleaned enough of him and his habits to stand me in good stead in a later time. Shall not Providence be praised?

It was actual hard hunger that called me away at length from the pleasant tormenting. I wasn't likely, though, to swallow my grudge, and he knew it. A year, or ten, or twenty might pass, but some day, for sure, I was coming back to claim my own. For we were rivals in blood. So, however he took it, I hailed it a happy accident that threw us together under other stars. We fought.

Have I in my talk told of "marking Patrick"? If so, it was but a clever feint. Whatever, as Anthony, I have said of "Patrick's" physical, or spiritual, decay, was mere talk for the nonce. I have always been strong and clear of conscience. We fought—there are men yet living to vouch for it—unscathed. My luck had not come then.

It came in 1912. Yes, it was the turn of a card, but when the choice fell between him and me, was I to risk half a chance—perhaps to win, no doubt—half a chance, to let him swallow a capsule and escape his just damnation again? He escape, while I went down among the dead men? No, by my fair name. No; I stacked the cards for my ever-so-distant cousin Anthony and had the satisfaction of tending him in his last moments.

When I had given him my name, consigned him to Carlisle, sent him to receive elegies and palms and a noble inscription partly in the worst Latin—how much more men lauded a

Patrick when dead!—when I had done these things, I was free for a while to think.

Among the things which I had inherited from him, though not bequeathed, was a letter written at some length to his London solicitors. The microbes and the cards had intervened in time. That letter was never sent: it served me as a model many a day until I had every twist and turn of the writing so pat that my own hand seemed unfamiliar. Then without fear or scruple, I sent its copy, but practised, practised, until my muscles by inveterate use found Anthony's mincing penmanship a natural dress for words.

I studied my part from the safe distance of two oceans' length. I demanded copies of documents whose exact purport had "slipped my mind," sent for others that I might annotate or "amend" them, complained of a "dearth of information." Inside the year I had Anthony at my fingers' ends.

How could I fail? After a generation's absence who would not recognize me by the "Veryan jaw," who would particularize a different shading of the eye, who would remark—save in pity—the huskiness of Anthony's voice? There was no trouble, there was no risk, in acquiring Anthony's house and goods; they were mine to gloat upon, if gloating were my wish.

I could laugh in my sleeve with double assurance. During the semi-siege of Anthony long before, I had caught his methods, his materials, his tricks, to a miracle. What with that learning, and with my study of notes and manuscripts requisitioned while yet I remained in South America, I had the vanity to resume his life-work when it was my humour.

So I reigned in his stead.

Well, perhaps I gloated, but gloating must pall. Seven years had nearly passed when—did a just god make them play the game to suit my fancy? So it might seem to one detached from the "unconnected" accidents which threw the members of the family into something like a panic during the opening years of the present decade.

Considering the others, I have often wondered how *she* burst into being among that desperate crew. A bonny young creature, gifted, charming, humorous, courageous—who would not lay down his life for her? Who would not give his all to have her

by? I felt the thews of my icy heart gradually being softened, stirred by a feeling I had never known before.

It was not in her blood, the rotten strain of the Peacock's descendants, that infection of excess, that just-too-much, the like seeking out like, mating with like and breeding like, the infection that ravaged their peace, disturbed their sleep of nights, and gave a starting push to the violence of their taking off. This stigma, searching its way into remote corners, found for a victim such a one as Arnott's younger brother, a finer poet, they say, than Evelyn himself, but with a genius for vice. Who should have been surprised that he was found lifeless there in the street of his haunts and habitués?

One by one they succumbed, victims of their own leaping blood.

There was none to see on that other misty morning, but it needs no shrewdness to imagine Dalroy Crabtree's fury, one of his frequent ungovernable passions—something akin to madness that communicated itself to the animal which stamped out his life. It was reckless blood, none more reckless than that of James Mottram's father, who needed only to be opposed in order to insist on anything. His crazy venture on this storm-lashed coast was virtually suicide. A man taking photographs in the midst of a whirlpool.

Among the heedless, fate is a god, but they cannot cast their own horoscopes. Indeed it was when I, being the younger Mottram's guest near Salisbury one night, asked what was his belief of this apparent thing that dogged their heels, that he, standing at the window and looking out across the frosty plain, spoke of the stars—and I, little dreaming of what great events it would lead to, told him to look from heaven to earth, and asked whether someone had moved just then from shrub to shrub across the moon-filled sward.

Did I by chance throw in my voice some of the old urgence of suggestion, or was the clay here ready for the hand? From his pliant assent and avid falling on my other leads, I learned that here was a man for me. For a long hour I communed with myself, wondering what I dared to do, and I dared the utmost.

The report is known of what ensued that night. The story goes that Mottram was attacked and that I rescued him. Turn it about in all respects, turn it inside out, and you have it true.

The man I fell upon and on whose face I wrote strange characters, and in whose mind I inscribed indelibly a bogus story, I made my slave. But of him more on a later page.

That topsy-turvy evening bore harvest in the refuging of the heirs in Kestrel's Eyrie Castle, one by one. I had not sent for them; only, when more than one of these weak, contemptible creatures had come, I called bluff Hector here to be their foil. Now, my heart held no particular enmity against these people, but a feeling of cold indifference, possibly not far removed from a cold loathing. I had something new to gloat on now—if it was gloating I wanted—for they were afraid, and I could feed upon their fears.

They had not forgotten the bruit of that mad night in Mottram's house on Salisbury Plain; nor had I. I cannot say precisely when it was that I first began to dwell, in mere fantasy, on the repetition of that scene. How might I rid myself of them? I did not want to be rid of them, could not imagine being rid of them, for there under my eyes they were afraid. The fantasies were mere fantasies always, dreams that I never dreamed would take effect. I devised methods; the method was not the same for each.

I was aghast that first day when I realized they *might* take effect. I was standing on the Jericho Terrace above the sound, looking across the moors—of this later, if time permits.

While the days sped, I used this means and that to consolidate my position, guarding against dangers all the while. There was one danger at my very door, that poor wretch who had been Anthony's light-o'-love.

I measured the relative chances of embarrassment, and concluded not to send her away, as I might have done. It would not be prudent. Rather, by relieving her poverty and promising her that relief only so long as I remained unmolested, I made my position stronger. I felt myself safe for as long as we should not actually encounter each other. That encounter would not take place—I saw to that.

This covenant I made with the woman through the agency of Hawkwell, a man not unknown to our family, but unknown to me, one who had settled here in St. David's before my "return" from South America. In choosing him through whom to transact all my business, I had yet another safeguard.

How these conceits pall in the telling! In company with my

coterie I once made a survey of the island, considering how to "defend" it against interlopers. It was then that Hector suggested and I agreed that we blow up the old landing place, a piece of foolery at which fools solemnly assisted. I say foolery, because there must be points along the cliffs where skilled climbers could swarm up.

But I sought to make my sovereignty absolute by an audacious piece of mockery, the resumption, even the completion, of the life-work that Anthony had been cut off from by some woman's death.

I was immersed in the Evidences when first I took up the threads after my "return," while I availed myself of my rival's jottings and plans. I even developed a pleasure in the task, but I realized that when I had to depend on my own materials my "ability" waned. I felt that I must make all secure against the time when the old notes gave out utterly.

Therefore I set off a firework, forever to preclude suspicion unborn, as gaudy a piece of roguery as ever I heard of. Having made up a bundle of papers to represent the chapter I had last dealt with, I "lost" them in the Sound in the presence of many witnesses. Then, refreshing my memory in the night-time with the contents of the actual manuscript, I restored the chapter "out of my head." It was a marvel. The old man's grip of his topic was the talk of the castle for months. I was Anthony, indeed, such a one as my predecessor would have despaired to emulate.

Some years went by while I enjoyed this dual state, the active indifference, so to speak, beneath my Christian charity to these penned-in people—and in the dream-fugue wherein I revelled in their extinction one by one. At first, as I have said, the dream-fugue was realized as fantasy, never to find expression in the act. But a time came in 1924 when I found this occasional orgy of blood-lust becoming regularly recurrent, and so it went on for a year, until, one day, I was suddenly aware that these things *might* happen. I fell aghast that day, while I looked across the moorlands on a hazy afternoon, and the image of old Anthony loomed up, a Colossus above the countryside he had ravaged and laid waste in his dispensation. *He* would not have stuck at murder. Well, I was he.

Shrinking from this at first, I grew accustomed to it, and

came, though with terror, to hug my fantasy to my heart. To kill just once (I told myself)—I'd rest content thereafter. Measured in time, these rhapsodies were but moments in the continuum of days. In the long intervals, the fear recurred, cowardly fear, fear of consequences, anticipatory fear of conscience—but I knew the thing would be done.

But there was this one fair young creature, this girl, Vernon's granddaughter, one of the three things on earth that made life worth while. Indeed, when I considered, I knew that she alone—that without her life would not be worth while. If this bloody deed meant that she would flee and I would lose her, it must not be done. But since it must be done, she must be prepared. I knew her dauntless, but she must be prepared.

I had learned and had not lost the old mesmeric gift of my father, of charging and changing the voice, of lulling with it, of instilling suggestion, of thus dominating another will, and making the patient forget. It was dangerous, I knew, the riskiest playing with fire, but my own case was desperate. I must not lose her! More than once since the *certainty* of murder came, I impressed my will on hers, commanded her never to fear, never to leave me, never to yield her love.

When the time came for that first death, she was steeled for the ordeal I had determined upon.

Up to the very moment of Standish Nicholson's death, I felt toward him, as toward all the rest except Arthura, cold, grave indifference.

I told myself that, having killed *one,* I should be satisfied.

Now, when first I had returned as lord and master of Kestrel's Eyrie, and had braced up its beaten walls and restored it to soundness, I discovered that Shakespeare's Gothic castle was indeed of the technical Gothic sort they revelled in in his time. Shakespeare had been thorough, and I found that he had implanted in the castle a secret mechanism, probably installed merely as a virtuoso's curiosity, a door-frame that came away as a door, controlled by a lever disguised as the shelf of a cupboard. (One other such foible I found, of which presently.) But this I planned to use. I had meditated and resolved that, since this was to be my only murder, I'd use the door, for I was loath that such an agency should be wasted. I had long before caused the door itself to be locked permanently, pad-

locked for extra safety, the special keys in Mottram's custody, all impregnable, impervious. But I knew my way out, and that night I used it.

There was a dagger which had been my—Patrick's—father's, lying unknown, I was certain, in a chest in the billiard room these many years. This, too, I thought of as useful for my work.

What need to recount the simple deed of that night? I went out through the black door, the metal shrilling a little, as I knew it would, but unless folk were alarmed there was no danger in that. Even if they awoke and found me there, I could put them off with a tale, the murder only postponed. I waited a moment outside in the passage to see if there were any response, but minutes passed and it seemed that none had heard. I had seen to it, of course, that I as well as Hector had the master-key of all the doors, and with it, proceeding to young Nicholson's room, I entered, roused him, spoke of a noise, bade him follow, led him downstairs, made a fictitious search by candle light, found the opportunity to take the dagger from the chest which held it, and stabbed him to death while he preceded me through the kitchen quarters.

I cannot describe the hideous reaction which immediately followed the attack. Enough that I had just sufficient energy and no more to cleanse the weapon at the kitchen sink, conceal it in the wall, where I had found the Missal, return through Mottram's room to mine, and wait until discovery should be made. As I passed Hector's door, I gave it one sharp knock.

As a final turn to add to the puzzle I made use of the door again. For in testing its action I had found that when the frame as a whole returned to place, the locking mechanisms were so involved that one bolt pressed the other, and before the weighted frame could come to rest, the knob of the door-within-a-door would turn, very slowly. Now, therefore, that the others were downstairs, except Robert somewhere in the Long Corridor and James in his own room, I swung the frame just sufficiently to enable the phenomenon to take place when James, whom I called out to in apparent fear, stood within the room. What the sequel was needs no telling anew. Robert, to be sure, had heard some unavoidable creak of the mechanism but could not account for it. He was utterly routed by my testimony backed by James—James whom I made to forget that he had heard a sound.

As you see, I was not afraid of Mottram. The closer he clung to me the better, for he was my most useful witness. And since, in easing my mind of these later secrets, it is necessary to tell of his condition, perhaps I should describe another activity of mine, resumed on Ramsey Island after a generation.

In the earlier years my interest was caught by the problems in the human fabric. Even with my scanty resources, I made considerable progress before my twenty-first year in experiments on the circulatory system of animals. Though Ray and Graham Brown in 1879 showed that when blood is admitted to tissues after stoppage the capillaries are widely dilated, it was no news to me. I had observed that a year or two before. I could furnish evidence thirty years in advance of the academicians that the capillaries were contractile. I had estimated the disparite amounts of blood required by the muscles in their various states of activity. I had dabbled with many things, though most of them I did not understand as I do now.

But I had made one particularly curious discovery in the course of the years at Coniston Park.

After some years of trial and after many tribulations, I was fortunate to discover a process whose action and nature were in that generation unknown. During experiments concerned with the circulatory system of animals, I had established that in crushing the muscles of the hind limbs, even without external bleeding, an immediate fall in blood pressure took place, this being succeeded by a more gradual decline to the level of shock. I cut the nerves of the limbs and found that the result persisted, thus proving that this shock condition was not due to irritation of the afferent nerves. No shock resulted, however, when the vessels of the damaged limb were clamped, and this, I argued, would suggest that in the other cases the apparent shock was due to the discharge of a toxic material into the circulation.

Having inferred some such substance from its effects, I made an effort to discover its composition. At length I learned that a substance with similar properties was an organic base which could be produced from many proteins by decomposing them. The name I gave to it does not matter—my findings were never published to the world—but it was the same thing that savants today call "histamine."

In time I succeeded in isolating this histamine-*like* substance

from the tissues, and having done so, I devoted months to testing its precise action upon the circulation. When it was injected intravenously, even in exceedingly minute dosage, it produced a fall of arterial pressure similar to that caused by a typical dilator, such as the nitrites and the chlorine esters. In larger doses, histamine brought about an irremediable collapse, a large part of the blood passing out of circulation, remaining somewhere at the periphery. I supposed—and this is a point whereon I anticipated biochemists of today—this was because the capillaries were dilated by the histamine, and the blood, which had apparently disappeared, was stored in them.

It was as if most of the fluid in a broad stream were diverted to ten thousand tiny stagnant pools.

Now, my object in telling all this is mainly to point out the likeness of the symptoms of histamine-injection and massive injury. The pictures of profound shock obtained in each case are simply indistinguishable.

Now, my impulse to attack Mottram had occurred, not as the culmination, but as the beginning of my subjugation of him. It was almost the first, though not quite the first of my playing with fire; I mean the resumption of my old interests. Shortly before that momentous Wiltshire visit it had seemed to me that I might recommence my chemical investigations here. In repairing the chapel which lay on the home farm the workmen found a large space behind the altar. Evidently the original cell had been enlarged and then cut down to its former size again. Without design, I retained the smaller size, walling up the extra space.

When I bethought me of making a secret hobby of my old interest, this space seemed admirably fit for my laboratory. All that I needed was a covert entrance and some little ventilation. Alone, secretly and slowly, working principally at night, I provided these, making an entrance through the floor and a number of vents hidden in the loose stone shingling of the roof. This work was done before Mottram arrived at the island. Slowly, too, under false names and addresses, I had collected chemicals through agencies in Manchester and elsewhere, and was almost ready to proceed effectively.

I needed small animals, too, but these I had no difficulty in obtaining, for the island had once been overrun with rabbits, and plenty remained for springeing. If anyone cares to look,

there is a little cemetery of these beasts not far from the Bronze Age circles on the cairn. Once, later on, in an audacious mood, I made use of a sheep from one of those flocks we kept at intervals. I could not manage this feat in the laboratory, to be sure, but imprisoned the beast in one of the disused offices of the farm, then left it still living out on the rocky hill (where it became an unsuspecting cause of great benefactions on the part of Robert Veryan).

But what has this to do with James? Much, for since I gradually made him my slave, a man of wax, I found *him* a useful animal. Do vivisectors, I wonder, lose something—something that prevents the heart from squirming when the blood spurts and a shriek is torn from the throat? Possibly. Possibly I do not comprehend the common view of these things. Only in James, for whom I had the same contemptuous indifference as for the rest, I had a thing of blood and tissues fit for experiment, fit to serve in order that problems might be solved.

That malleable mind forgot whatever it was bidden to forget. He never understood the hypo pits which came upon his arms; nor, I insured, was he curious to know. How many times have I watched him while, dazed, he stared at the wheals upon his wrists.

Wheals, for after many visits to the chapel at night and even sometimes daringly by day, I again dealt with the histamine-like extract; and histamine, when it is rubbed on the scarified skin, makes a temporary mark like that which follows the lash of a whip. Moreover, if it is injected in high dilution, or simply pricked into the skin, the wheal supervenes. The capillaries dilate—but of this later.

Now that I turn to the events of June 2, only a little more than two weeks ago, my pen falters, for there were in that night complexities I cannot unravel. This crime was unplanned, but its completion was my masterpiece.

The occurrences commenced, as I have said so many times to Frost and others, with Lionel's calling me; he had heard a definite man downstairs. I went with him past the sleeping James, passed into the Long Corridor and to the door of the balcony.

The great room above the stairs was dark, but we heard sounds unmistakeable, as of someone feeling his way along the

walls. Then came a scratch of a match, and a steady glow somewhere in the forest of the library. Whoever the man was —and I was not yet convinced that he did not belong to the household—he must be searching for a book. It did not then occur to me, and I am not sure now while I write, that the thing he sought was that small illuminated Missal I had found in the cubby hole where at that moment lay the Italian blade with which I had killed young Nicholson. The two objects were still hidden there together.

We remained in darkness, but presently the man turned the end of the farthest bookcase, with a candle in one hand, the other hand cupped beneath to catch the drippings. His face I saw enough of to recognize at once, in my astonishment, the singular little man, a stranger to me, who had lately come to St. David's and been appointed Curator of the Museum of the Saints. He was stark naked, as I thought at first, but before he disappeared beyond the case, I discerned a pair of trunks, apparently his only clothing.

I felt Lionel stir beside me. "Hold back," I whispered. "If he is looking for something, it may prove important for us." I felt sure that here was some secret I did not know, and already it had become a torture to me.

For half an hour we waited until the curator's search was done, his light went out, and we heard him very softly moving toward the stairs. We heard him go down. We waited, I with great difficulty restraining Lionel. Then we went down too.

In fine, we followed this man, not always keeping him in sight, from room to room, watched him explore by his own candlelight. He had keys which opened doors and chests. He removed the rugs and tapped very softly on each stone of the floors. With the keenness of one exploring new territory, he tried everything, probed everywhere. Setting his light upon the floor, where the carpet had been rolled away, he did experiments with every stone of the wall of the Hall of Curtains as high as he could reach, knocking, thrusting, picking with his nails, pressing together and apart, and obviously seeking for the little cupboard I knew of—or for another like it.

This was passing strange, and when at length, giving over his search, the man picked up his candle, he replaced the rug, and proceeded to the window, obviously with a view to departure, I again checked my youthful companion.

"He will come again, no doubt. Better to wait another time, and see what he is after."

Lionel, in a frantic whisper, urged that the man might be the murderer of 1925.

"If he is," I replied, "he is where we know where to find him, unless he is drowned getting back, and I should think there is small likelihood of that."

In the end my wisdom prevailed. I had judged that in all probability the curator, having combed the library, and drawn a blank in some of the lower rooms, would return again. When, then, he returned and gave his attention to the Refectory, I considered it very likely that he would find the cupboard—and the dagger!

I thanked whatever gods there be for this timely hint, and thought at once what was the quickest and safest way of disposing of the instrument. Even while we stood at the forced window out of which the man had disappeared, and speculated as to how he would leave the island, a plan was working in my mind.

"Go into the kitchen," I said, "and get candles for us."

"How about your torch?"

"I have tried it and it doesn't work. I believe it has burnt out. Go along, Lionel, there's a good fellow. Our visitor has gone, but he may have left something significant behind. If we are to keep this secret, we must cover what traces he may have left, though there seems no more than a little harmless water that will dry up."

I remember Lionel said, "Yes, I don't suppose anyone will be licking the floors for salt."

He went into the kitchen, and while I was alone, I opened the cupboard and took the dagger therefrom, concealing it in the wide sleeve of my dressing-gown. It was not until I had touched the handle that the thought occurred to me that *here* was yet another opportunity. The idea germinated and matured in the same instant. The curator's visit was the signal for Lionel's death. I preceded him, holding my torch, which I told him had unexpectedly come to life again. When we neared the arras by the door, I reached out a foot and hooked a chair-leg, giving at the same time a muffled cry of apparent fear—muffled, because for the present I dared not attract attention from above. My torch dropped on the floor, extinguished. The

chair descended in Lionel's path, and I, falling back across it, managed to knock out the candle he carried.

The Hall was not completely dark, and I, slipping to the floor, brought down Lionel, and with one stab, as well directed as I could make it in the dark, drove the poniard into him not far from the neck. At once he commenced to bleed profusely.

For the next few seconds I thrashed about on the floor, working the chairs into the fray, much as if I grappled with some assailant who in turn grappled with both of us, and Lionel, not knowing friend from foe in the darkness, fought me off. With superior knowledge, and a weapon, before a minute passed I had reduced him to a senseless hulk, with blood bubbling in his breath.

Once more I raised the poniard—I found I could not drive home the finishing blow. The reaction had set in.

I had done for him, I knew, and he must die without further help from me.

I rose to my feet, feeling giddy, but striving to collect my senses and my wits. Sorry for what I had done, no doubt, but sorrier still for what might follow.

Possibly it was an irrational thought, but it was strong. I dared not return to my room and leave Lionel to be discovered, as I had done with Standish Nicholson. Somehow I felt that two such crimes within the precincts of the castle might prejudice the world too strongly against those within, among them me.

Now I felt sorry that there were no more traces of the curator than a little salt, and a forced window, which might be the work of any man inside or out.

I walked up and down in the darkness many times, carrying the dagger, which had dried, pondering what my best plan was. Whether I should not after all return and leave events to take their course and brave the matter out. Or should I raise immediate alarm? Or was there another way?

I found another way. I remembered the rain of two days before, and expected sodden places in the farmyard. Therefore I first tied two napkins strongly about my slippered feet, then went out by the forced window, traversed the Jericho Terrace, passed among the buildings of the farm, and entered the laboratory. There was some of the histamine-like substance there, recently prepared, and my experiments on Mottram had long ago satisfied me as to dosage.

Perhaps two hours after I had killed Lionel I returned, and found him breathing still. It was a distinct surprise, and an unpleasant one. Before I did to myself what was necessary, I must ensure his death. And still the inhibition remained; I was loath to stab him again in cold blood. Another trip to the laboratory was indicated. With new napkins (the others I had tied about a goodly stone and flung into the sea) I made a second journey, this time to secure morphia, of which I had accumulated a large supply for experimental purposes.

I gave Lionel three or four times a killing dose of this, and had the satisfaction of hearing his breath die down. He would not last long now.

But while he still breathed, and therefore bled, I half carried, half dragged him across the floor of the hall to the small chamber used as a cloakroom, and laid him there for his final moments.

Now for me came the ordeal. Before I reconciled myself to it, I had thought of other voluntary gashes. Portia's and Mrs. Fitz-Herbert's, she who wounded herself for that portrait of roguery, the fourth George. I gritted my teeth and—

But first I made an effective tourniquet of the belt of my dressing-gown somewhat high on the left arm and injected this histamine-extract below. Then rapidly I smashed the window of the little room with the hat-stand, leaving the stand overturned, so as to make a plausible picture of the thing overturned in struggle. It was this crash, I believe, that awakened Hector Bransonby, though his account, naturally, suggests a later hour for his awakening.

It was then, probably toward four A. M. that I inflicted on various fleshy parts small harmless wounds which might bleed, and one more serious gash in the thigh. It, too, was a flesh affair merely, but it would serve my purpose. Supporting myself with one hand on the downcast hat-rack, I quickly cast the dagger (where the hypodermic syringe and container had gone) through the broken window and over the edge of the cliff, the proximity of which had largely suggested the creation of this forced crime.

This weapon, for which I had provided an exit, had no telltale mark of mine upon it. When I let it fly on its way over the brink, I grasped it gloved with a handkerchief of Lionel's,

pierced through by the blade. Poniard and cloth would doubtless soon part company. Even did they not, what was there to attach them to me?

There remained only to dispose of myself and await discovery. I lowered myself to the same floor across which I had dragged Lionel, crawled to the spot where he had been struck down, and sank there where his blood had made a mighty pool.

I unfastened the tourniquet and waited for the substance to work.

How, incredibly, they found Lionel yet alive, and me seemingly on the verge of death, I need not tell. I remember little of it. That my condition and the blood about me showed that I had hardly enough left in my veins to keep my heart about its business was so obvious on the face of it that I believe no physician on earth would fail to pronounce me suffering from severe and fatal *shock!* And yet most of my blood was still inside me, lingering in the capillaries, where the extract had opened a way for it.

Shock! that was the trump of trumps, the card I found in my greatest need, the card that saved the game.

Lionel still lived: so much I gathered the next day and the next. At first I thought my senses at fault, that I was still delirious, when I heard it. Then, while the vestiges of shock died away, and I was restored to something like a normal frame of mind, I realized that he was alive. How, how, I repeat, I did not yet know.

It was uncertain how much of the night he would remember, how much tell. If he babbled of the curator, there would be double peril—to him, an innocent man, to me the guilty—me who none the less had the will to live.

So, from the medicine chest above my head, I put a quiet poison in Lionel's draught while Mrs. Powell and all the rest were in the room—and let the bottle fall from my windowledge the next time I was alone. This third time Lionel could hardly fail to go out in peace. He did.

I could have accomplished none of my later exploits without strength, but strength I had abundantly. In spite of what slurs I may have cast when discussing myself from Anthony's point of view, I have always been strong, and I am hale and hearty tonight. Shrewdness will have guessed by now that my "recovery" under Clegyrn's care was due to the fact that no one,

he no more than any, guessed my actual condition, masked as it was by the action of the histamine-like substance. They supposed me on the verge of collapse from the loss of blood, as Lionel actually must have been, whereas in reality after thirty-six hours I was little the worse save for a wound in the thigh which gave me no trouble besides pain.

I required a good deal of exertion to keep my vitality low enough to pass muster for a sick man's. Therefore I welcomed the arrival of the young American, and the chance to "talk myself half to death." More than once when Clegyrn railed against me, urging me "rest," I could have raised myself from the bed and buffeted him to the floor—and would have gladly.

I wanted a doctor I could lead by the nose; therefore I demanded Clegyrn, whose uncouthness, whose rantings and railings and drinkings I had withstood cheerfully, even whose fatuous "blood-tests" once or twice of late I had undergone!

This Clegyrn I had renewed my "old intimacy" with was my safest guard. Supposed to know all about my make-up, he never so much as dreamed of my substitution, for the one ineffacable mark on my body is a scar received years after that intimacy—

How strange! I wrote just then as if I *were* Anthony. The scar I mention is one I saw when Anthony was dying in the Argentine, and like the reprobate he never ceased to be until the breath was out of him, he boasted of its acquisition.

As for Clegyrn, I treated him with the jocular disrespect I imagined best fitted our relationship, and I received his characteristic sputtering responses. There was a man who would swear to my identity had he a hundred souls to howl for perjury.

There have been many deaths here. Crimes unalike, though one mind moved them all. But I am no ordinary criminal, and of these five two bear an artificial resmblance only because the second—Lionel's death—was scarcely meditated. Shall I pause for them all? But briefly.

Over that rash, suspicious, intruding fool, Norshire, I linger for minutes only. I waited well awake, with my ear at the black door until after midnight, straining to hear what I knew I would hear, the softest whisper of his movement through the passage. I gave him long enough to make his way to the front of the castle, then opened the black door and waited

again outside to make sure that it had roused no one. If it had, of course, I was ready with the simplest of excuses, and there was Norshire eminently fit to be caught red-handed below. But no other door opened inquiringly.

I was more than a little afraid of this man, liar and impostor as he obviously was, who knew an indefinite quantity of our annals, and evidently suspected something amiss with my position here. I had a very cool purpose to get him out of the way, and chancing to remember how heavily he had been shod with rubber, I felt for, and found, as I expected, his boots outside his door. While I followed where he had gone through the Long Corridor, I may have been a little mad. Suffice it that I made certain he had not lingered on the balcony, that I descended, that I waited in ambush for him in the little antechamber, and that when he came through the door I was behind him with one of those boots, a splendid blackjack, in my hand. I knew what he was looking for there in the little room, and although I knew he would not find it, that would not save his life. With all my energy, and it was ample, I struck him a blow in the cranium, and down he crashed, good as dead, though no bruise would appear.

I was upon him in an instant, and his necktie was knotted deep in his neck before consciousness came. I did not even stand by. Indeed, I must have been a little mad, for I went on my way through the rooms with his handkerchief wrapped round my hand, gathering this object and that to stuff his pockets with. He was almost if not quite dead when I returned. I waited, for I had all night to wait, to make all sure, then disposed of my two weapons in such wise as might give subject for no very profitable thought. And I put on his other boot for him.

I went back to my room through James's, feeling that I had done a good night's work.

I think that all of these late acts of mine are traceable to a certain fever in the blood. An incident sprang from my eagerness to keep in touch with the latest flying minute in physiological chemistry. I dared not subscribe for any scientific journal, and my fare at Kestrel's Eyrie was restricted to what I might pick up in some popular article in the *Saturday Review* or other weekly. On my occasional London visits I could

enjoy only a few stolen hours in the British Museum. I durst not invite comment even there.

My curiosity, nay, an irresistible desire sprang up in me on finding reference to lectures *"On certain aspects of biochemistry"* given in the University of London during the Summer Session of 1925, but try as I might, I could not think of any means of finding what Dale's * contributions might be. For I had good reason to suppose (and it proved true) that he had been exploring the same corner of the field as I, and I burned to find if his results tallied with mine.

So avid was I to lay my hands on this dissertation, that any scheme, however childish, however fantastic, however risky, would serve, and it fell out that there was a way, for early in this year I learned that the lectures would appear in print, though not immediately, and this discovery occurred about the time we went up to London again for Arthura's playing.

In the Museum then I wrote a letter to a well known book repository, which aided Robert Veryan in his collections, asking them in his name to send an advance copy of the Dale lecture as soon as sheets might be obtained. To obscure my tracks, I asked that when the Dale material was ready two other quite different works should be forwarded with it, and that the acknowledgment of the order together with the letter I was writing should be sent to a certain address in London, where I received and destroyed the same.

In due time the publications were delivered to Robert in Kestrel's Eyrie, and he, puzzled what to make of them, brought them to me. While secretly I studied Dale with a triumphant pleasure, Frost's confrères tried vainly to trace the untraceable order in London.

Murder was in my blood now, and I felt it owing me to perform one other gratuitous crime like the death of young Nicholson. Considerations of safety were gone; the crime itself was the thing. The little sally I now tell of was easiest of all, with the sentries methodically walking their posts like slow automata, dependable not to make a sudden turn or change their courses. I helped Frost place these men and learned with

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supreme satisfaction—this was the keynote of it all—that not a man of them would venture himself alone in the Hall of Statues overnight. How I blessed Maverick! Even so, had the guards but been fixed, I never could have done this thing in the way I did; but while they passed this way and that on the corridors, along the balcony, round about the castle on the terrace, I had but to await their passing, and be safe. A stranger, breaking in, would possibly have been caught; not so I, who knew their assigned patrols.

The evening before, I had been left alone on the western reach of the Jericho Terrace while Arthura fetched me an overcoat from the antechamber. The honest constable being out of sight and hearing, I tore away sundry patches of ivy beneath Evelyn's window, and tucked the vine up again sufficiently to escape the vigilance of the sentinel. But I knew the torn spots would be discovered in the morning and duly attributed to Evelyn.

Later that night, with a man "guarding" my corridor, I could not go out, as my fancy preferred, by my padlocked door this time; so I must tackle James again, make his sleep sound, and depart by his room.

When the muffled but sufficiently heavy tread of the guardsman indicated that he had reached this end of his journey and was departing toward the Long Corridor, I slipped out and simply followed him as far as the door of the black chamber. When the man was far toward the north of the building, I unlocked the black chamber as quietly as possible, entered, and locked myself within. Hearing the man return toward my own and Mottram's room, I unlocked the opposite door, let myself out, and went straight to Arnott's room.

A light showed at lintel and threshold, as I expected it would, for he was making progress with his poem. I was glad of this, for it meant a speedy response to my tap. He seemed a little surprised to see me, clad though I was in dressing-gown and slippers. I professed wakefulness and evinced an interest in his forwardness, and while he turned to lead me to his table, I caught him backward by the neck, and jammed a plain, unmarked handkerchief into his gaping mouth.

I was bold. I did not extinguish the light until after the constable had passed and repassed the door, but by that time I had my victim trussed though not unconscious. He was so slight

of build that with him flung over one shoulder and his favorite Buddha in the curve of my other arm, even I, old Anthony, felt but slightly burdened. When my faithful guardsman had come and gone again, I ventured into the corridor and toward the balcony. A sentinel there sometimes looked into the towers, and while he was on this mission in Arthura's tower, I went down among the statues, where I set down my burdens and attached them, with Arnott's own linen, to each other.

Through antechamber, door, and window, I watched, awaiting the time when the absence of the man on the Jericho Terrace and of the man wandering from the Refectory to the Hall of Curtains should synchronize. When that interval occurred, it was no difficult matter to open a French window, carry Evelyn to the brink and unload him in the sound. It was done expeditiously in less than ten seconds, I am sure.

I went back to my room feeling a better man.

And after all this, and all these other deaths, to have the thing come that I most had feared; to envisage the possibility of Arthura's death. Hers! How I abhor and fear the thought. But who knows? It may yet be.

. . . I made my first essay in this hand weeks ago. It was queer to use my old writing when I tried to put aside the practice and restraint of years. Patrick's script appeared, but encrusted with the habits of the new: Anthony's. I had found the management of my "old" persuasive voice equally difficult when I mesmerized the girl, although I know what an easy feat is the mere disguise of one's customary tones. I think that my stratagem there kept Arthura with me through these latter days. But shall I ever give her up?

Half of these last nights, when I seemed at work alone upon the Evidences, I was concocting this. Knowing my time was not forever, I would make the most of it. I even compiled notes, hoping to build a perfect exposition. This crude draft must have a successor if there is time.

Time! Why, as it has befallen in the past, so it may continue! Why, in the future there may be more to tell.

Who am I, I ask myself. Am I he? Or am I I? Once or twice I have felt like one destroying his own kindred. If I should ever repent, then Anthony, the old wretch, would be evening the score. Well, Anthony, be content. As it is, your monument makes a brave show, though not your own.

The rest seemed a mere struggling of the pen across the page, but part of it was decipherable.

The notes are shredded and safely in the Refectory fire. This must be the last draft . . . truth . . . humanly speaking possible . . . as I hope to join Anthony in hell . . . lest "proof" be adduced against the innocent. Frost has taken the wrong lead, unless he is deeper than I think.

A voice telling me . . . the American clings to the castle . . . like the rest, because of her. Because of her.

I have decided, dear . . . if I must die, you shall go with . . .

The dawn was coming, gray as glass.

"Keverne! Is she—has she spoken?"

Mrs. Powell lifted her head and nodded.

Tom bent over Arthura with quickened breath. "But her eyes are still—what did she say?"

"She is just sleeping now."

"But what did she say?"

"She said something about you, sir."

"About me? Are you sure?"

"That you were still here and that you were hurt, sir."

"She said that I was hurt?"

"Yes, sir, and that she would go to you."

"What could that mean?"

Mrs. Powell turned without speech to the placid brown face on the pillow. No one spoke.

The American bit his lip, then uttered an exclamation so sharp that the nurse looked reproachfully at him.

"Why, that's it! Hector, Frost—that explains everything!"

The others waited.

"You see, don't you? We couldn't figure how she came to—how Sir Anthony—Patrick, I mean—brought her to the chapel. Don't you see? The devil came to her and told her that I hadn't gone away after all. 'Still here'—wasn't that it, Mrs. Powell? And he made out that I was hurt, maybe that I had been at-

tacked, and so she went with him to find me as she thought, and when they got out—"

Hector interposed. "You're forgetting the guards. The constables would have seen them."

"Not much! Haven't we just read how Sir Ant—how the old man laughed at the guards? It was the same as with Arnott. Why, he probably spun some yarn to make her think they must be avoided and got her down and out while the constables were looking the other way; only he didn't carry her, of course. But when he had escorted her off the terrace, he must have clapped a gag into her mouth right away, and I guess she fainted then or she'd have said something about it, maybe."

Hector gave a clucking sound, probably of doubt. "It may be, of course. On the other hand—" His voice trailed out.

"There is no other hand," declared Tom. "It's unique. It's the only way it could have been done. She—she was coming to me—"

Something welled in his throat, and he felt most abominably like hiding his thoughts. But he spoke aloud, while he looked down at the sleeping girl.

"Arthura, you brave little thing, I'm coming to you now. I'll be coming to you all my life—so help me, if I'm not going to."

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Jun 6 '32	Feb 9 '33	Aug 28 '34	
Jun 21 '32	Mar 16 '33	Oct 15 '34	
Jul 2 '32	Apr 15 '33	Oct 22 '34	
Jul 9 '32	Apr 28 '33	Nov 10 '34	
Jul 14 '32	Jun 16 '33	Dec 18 '34	
Jul 20 '32	Jul 25 '33		
Aug 8 '32	Aug 10 '33	Jan 15 '35	
		Apr 5 '35	
Aug 26 '32		May 7 '35	
	Nov 9 '33		
Oct 5 '32		Jun 4 '35	
	Dec 12 '33	Jul 30 '35	
Nov 5 '32			
Nov 19 '32	Jan 22 '34	Dec 13 '35	
	Feb 2 '34	Jan 6 '36	
Dec 3 '32			
Dec 12 '32	Feb 7 '34	Jan 11 '36	
Dec 24 '32	Feb 22 '34		
Jan 14 '33	Apr 17 '34	Jan 21 '36	
Jan 30 '33		Mar 12 '36	

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REGULATIONS

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Each book may be kept two weeks, except books in great demand, which may be restricted to one week, or less. A book that may be kept two weeks may be renewed for two weeks more on application, unless it is reserved for another borrower.

When renewing a book by mail or telephone give title, number and date due.

Each book kept overtime is subject to a fine of two cents a day until its return.

Books should be examined for mutilations, etc., at the time of borrowing, as the last borrower must be held responsible.

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